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ABSTRACT

The intent of this paper is to examine the issues, problems, implications, rationale, and basic assumptions behind the reexamination of the need for a generally accepted national policy for vocational education. The paper is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 1 establishes a framework to use in dealing with the main issues. The second chapter presents background information dealing with many of the questions regarding philosophy and policy as well as principles for vocational education. The third chapter presents the information received from an eight question survey mailed to twenty-three leaders across the country. For example leaders asked (1) Do we have a current national policy for vocational education?, (2) If we have a national policy, is it adequate?, (3) Do you believe we have a clearly defined philosophy of vocational education?, and (4) What relationship should exist between a philosophy and a national policy? The fourth chapter reviews policies of the past and present and their relationship to a changing society. Chapter 5 discusses the need for national policy and what function it should serve. Chapter 6 discusses the specifics of policy in the areas of program policy, personnel policy, and evaluation policy. The seventh chapter contains recommendations on national policy. (LRA)

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THE NEED FOR A NATIONAL POLICY FOR
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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Preface

The reader and user of this paper may find it rather strange that the authors decided to place the work under copyright. The necessity for copyrighting the work is based mainly on the fact that the contents of Chapters 3, 4, and 5 represent the work of Eugene A. Nelson one of the co-authors and represents original work which he hopes to include in a future book that he is planning to write.

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Comments and input from the profession would be greatly appreciated by the authors.

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CHAPTER I

II. INTRODUCTION

The intent of this paper is to examine in a critical and objective manner the issues, problems, implications, rationale, and basic assumptions behind the re-examination of the need for a generally accepted national policy for vocational education. We have not found the task easy since we have approached the topic in such a manner that has allowed each of us to carefully examine basic assumptions regarding policy, public policy, principles of education and vocational education, and the philosophical basis for contemporary vocational education. We have attempted to examine documents and publications dealing with public policy in the broadest scope possible. In addition, we found many and varied opinions regarding policy and policy formulation.

Our attempt was directed at an unbiased examination of the issues associated with policy and especially policy, or rather a lack of it, in dealing with vocational education. Of special concern to us was the work and policy formulation dealing with human resources development in a much wider context as used by our friends in the Department of Labor who are responsible for the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, better known as CETA to the average working man in the United States.

A rather informal data gathering procedure was undertaken in order to obtain a variety of opinions from recognized leaders in government, state departments of education, state directors of vocational education, and distinguished university professors from around the nation. Some of their comments will be presented in this paper but the exact source will not be identified since it was never agreed that they would be quoted. The effort was worth the time since the responses were rather varied and helped us prepare for the task at hand.

We approached our task based upon the needs of learners who ultimately become the students in recognized vocational education activities. This approach was guarded in view of the historical mandate that vocational education is geared to meet the needs of the American labor market. Our major concern centered on the people to be served by public education in the United States. Our first concern has been for the dignity of the individual in being able to provide food, clothing, and shelter for self and dependents. This was and remains our intent.

Our investigation and background research efforts by necessity took us in to new areas of social science and at times caused us to get side-tracked. However, it served as a valuable learning experience. It became necessary to make some basic assumptions regarding philosophy, principles, and policy. We learned that policy scientists have some of the same problems as educators in defining terms in a meaningful and understandable manner. It was pointed out, by one knowledgeable about policy and policy formulation, that perhaps our profession has not matured sufficiently to have mutual agreement regarding commonality of terms associated with our major business, namely vocational education.

One authority pointed out that policy might be considered like a light on the stern of a ship, if you follow the light you can tell where the ship has been.

We re-examined the historical basis for vocational education as we know it today. We investigated present day practices of vocational education and contemporary legislation which are well known to most vocational educators. We reviewed data and did ERIC searches and all that neat stuff that researchers should do to form a basis for their work. We asked ourselves several times whether data based upon the past should play a significant role in the future from a very practical point of view. We asked ourselves several times the following question:

As we drive into the future how much time should we spend looking into the rear view mirror of the past?

We agreed that our intent and effort to influence national, state and local decision makers had best be focused on the future. Carl Sandburg said in PRAIRIE that "the past is a bucket of ashes." We have attempted to examine, review, and consider the ashes of the past as we consider the future of vocational education. We have considered the historical basis for vocational education, the guiding principles of vocational education, and what we believe to be philosophical basis of vocational education, as we moved ahead on the task before us.

A Framework for Grappling with Policy

There is concern today that we need a philosophy, principles, policy, or some other set of statements that will define the directions vocational education should take in a world of rapid change. This concern is generating so much discussion among vocational education leaders that an attempt to define some framework for understanding the problem is justified.

One can propose certain tasks which such a framework should accomplish:

1. It should make clear the relationship between the nature of the changes we are facing, and the responses that are being attempted through debate of philosophy, principles and policy. Ultimately, it is the characteristic of change in our society relative to the capability of vocational education which will define the criteria by which the adequacy of philosophy and policy will be judged.

2. The framework should make clear the distinction between philosophy, principles and policy or any other term which may be included in formulating the nature of the response that is being planned.

3. The framework should distinguish between such questions as "Do we need a philosophy for vocational education?" and the sister question, "Do we need a national policy or philosophy for vocational education?" The two questions are quite different in intention and consequence.

If by clarifying the issues, the framework can point to some central directions vocational education must take, it will have served its purpose well. It is doubtful if this paper can do all that, but sometimes trying is worthwhile as an end in itself.

In the following discussion, several central themes will emerge. It will be proposed that accelerated change is a fact of life in the twentieth century and it is likely to continue. Most of the problems facing vocational education arise not from the change itself, but in its lack of flexibility in assessing and coping with change. Rather than being prepared to manage diversity and complexity, we tend toward institutionalization and standardization. Rather than making use of technology for management and instruction, we follow the same labor intensive methods that have been used for centuries. It seems that if vocational education is to remain viable, it must develop new capabilities for assessing change and developing flexible responses to it. It will be suggested that the proper focus for philosophy and policy is not only the new social problems that emerge from change, but the capacities we need to deal with them.

Philosophy, principles and policy are important. But there will be little concern in this paper over answering such questions as "What is philosophy?" or "What is policy?" It will be proposed that these are transient expressions of belief and intent that arise out of the human being's continuous effort to understand his situation and make decisions regarding appropriate action. Dewey's framework of a continuous process of developing knowledge and translating it into action seems to be the most suitable for such a discussion. There will not be concern for absolute and fixed truths. There will be a concern for uncertainty, risk and the processes by which we examine our assumptions, assess change, make decisions and create new

conditions for sharing and cooperation in the vocational education community.

The distinction between a policy and a national policy will be treated in terms of what seems to be the fundamental issue involved, i.e., the politics of change. The task as we see it is not to transfer authority and power to the federal government, but to develop cohesion in the vocational education community while retaining local autonomy and flexibility in adapting to local conditions, needs and values. By applying information technology, and focusing effort on such concepts as instructional management, it will be proposed that such cohesion can be attained within the current structure of constitutional authority.

Again, the theme will be the capacity for flexibility - even individualization - as opposed to rigidity, standardization and institutionalization. These themes have as much to do with the processes by which philosophy and policy is formed as it has to do with the structure of vocational education which exists or that which might emerge.

CHAPTER II

SIGNIFICANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In order to set the stage for our appraisal of the situation and re-examination of the need for a national policy for vocational education a limited view of some basic background information leading up to this paper seemed to be in order. Readers are encouraged to examine in depth the various sources that we mention and form their own opinions on the subject. Our search and presentation has by necessity been limited to recent years.

Charles J. Law, State Director, Division of Occupational Education, Raleigh, North Carolina addressed the Annual Meeting of State Directors of Vocational Education, in Washington, D.C., during May 1975. In his paper entitled "A Search for a Philosophy of Vocational Education" (1975), Law emphasized (a) the need for a re-examination of the philosophic premises, (b) the need to return to John Dewey's ideas of direction, and (c) the need to reject a reliance on Charles A. Prosser's principles for contemporary use. It is reported that his compelling discourse served as a serious challenge to other state directors of vocational education.

A 1975 publication by the Division of Vocational Education of the University of California entitled, "Policy-Making for Vocational Education" (1975) stated, "one of the persistent stumbling blocks to quality vocational education programs has been the nature of, or in many instances the lack of, policy for vocational education at the state level." This Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education, United States Office of Education, funded project, directed by Melvin L. Barlow presented a series of principles based upon beliefs as to what is or should be true vocational education. The principles which were suggested are of a broad philosophical nature and were not intended as operational guidelines or rules and regulations. It was suggested that states may wish to use the principles as a basic for broad general policies and then translate those policies into operational policies and rules and regulations. Two examples from the twenty suggested principles follow:

vocational education benefits are the shared responsibility of the nation, the state and the local community.

vocational education is based upon a systematic assessment of social, economic, and employment needs. (p. 4)

The significance of this work should not go unnoticed. It is worthy of critical and careful examination by the profession and

implementation in cases where deemed appropriate. The suggestion that the principles, if accepted, should serve as the basis for broad general policies and then translated into operational policies and rules and regulations should be of concern to those interested in policy formulation.

On December 15, 1975, the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education (NACVE) presented to the Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare a statement entitled A CALL FOR A NATIONAL POLICY FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (1975). Some of the highlights of this report follow:

We urge policy-makers to acknowledge that there is no national policy for vocational education ...What passes for policy is a piece-meal accumulation of vocational programs, frequently overlaid on a discredited pattern...

We have no clearly articulated national goals for vocational education...

We call for a searching reassessment of our whole educational enterprise. We call for a reappraisal of the goals and accomplishments of American education at every level...

We are not calling for a new program, or new appropriation. We are calling for reappraisal.

We intend to do more. The National Council will research, evaluate, and prepare a suggested National Policy for Vocational Education. This proposed policy will be presented to the President, and to the Congress for their consideration. We believe that such a policy would move our nation toward a more efficient and systematic system.

From the tone of the preceding statements it seems that NACVE made a strong commitment to research, evaluate, and prepare a suggested National Policy for Vocational Education. It is now three years since this plea for a national policy was made public. What is happening among the members of the Council on this very important issue? Has a decision been made to scrap the idea, If so a public statement would seem to be in order. Did the Council act too quickly in presenting its call for a policy? We are entitled to know the answer.

Nineteen resolutions were adopted by the American Vocational Education Association delegate assembly at the 1976 AVA conference in Houston, Texas. Resolution, Number 17, related directly to the

issue of policy. This resolution, Formulation of a National Vocational Education Policy, stated the following:

...Whereas, there is no national manpower policy and no national policy regarding the delivery of vocational education services through the various federal, state, and local, and private agencies; and

Whereas, in the absence of a national policy the support patterns and programs of vocational education are disseminated through various and numerous delivery systems;

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the AVA call for the development of a national policy for vocational education; and

Be It Further Resolved, that in order to accomplish the above, the AVA call upon the President of the United States to convene a national conference on vocational education; and

Be It Further Resolved, that if such a conference should be called, AVA encourage the convening of state conferences in order to obtain grassroots input prior to the national conference; and

Be It Further Resolved, that the AVA take the leadership in developing guidelines for such conferences to insure representative participation and to provide basis for the formulation for a sound national policy for vocational education. (p. 96; American Vocational Journal, Feb. 1977)

The members of the delegate assembly acting for the membership of AVA has clearly called for the development of a national policy for vocational education. What is the present state of affairs within AVA in responding to this 1976 call for a national policy? Aren't we entitled to some explanation?

THE FUTURE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (1977) a publication by the National Center for Research on Vocational Education presented the 23 papers commissioned for the National Bicentennial Conference on Vocational Education. This conference was planned and sponsored jointly by the National and State Advisory Councils on Vocational Education. One of the major purposes of the conference was "to examine the influence of forces which make an impact on vocational education decisions and policymakers; to explore those factors which may influence vocational education in the future. One of the most scholarly papers that emerged from the conference was Henry David's paper "On Thinking About Vocational Education Policy."

The framework for policy study suggested by David should be given serious study by anyone serious about the development of a national policy for vocational education. He calls for four things to take place before any attempt is made to state a policy for vocational education. These items are worthy of note:

One is a disinterested examination of the admittedly overloaded goal structure commonly associated with vocational education.

The second task--which flows from the first--is a reconstruction of the expanded number of functions that vocational education is expected to perform.

The third, is an appraisal of the larger social and economic policy context within which the federal, state, and local public policies for vocational education are located, and with which they are assumed to interact with some positive consequences.

The fourth task is inquiry into the state of available knowledge and information that is functionally useful for policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. (p. 9)

It must be pointed out that the David paper was specifically contracted for and commissioned by the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education for presentation at the Bicentennial Conference on Vocational Education. It was planned for and was to be a significant part of the conference program. This is mentioned only so that the reader will be well informed about the connection between this paper and the statement from NACVE entitled A CALL FOR A NATIONAL POLICY FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION which has previously been mentioned and described in some detail. Without the NACVE statement the David paper might never have been commissioned. This in no way is intended to imply any less significance should be attached to the David paper. It is a most scholarly, well prepared, documented statement dealing with policy formulation for vocational education.

A national workshop was held during March 1977 directly dealing with the philosophy of vocational education. This activity under the able leadership of Floyd L. McKinney and Katy Greenwood was called a Workshop for Interpreting Vocational Education. The workshop was sponsored in cooperation with the Texas Education Agency and the U.S. Office of Education. The final report from this workshop, WORKSHOP FOR INTERPRETING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS AND FINAL REPORT (1977) describes the rationale for the conference in the following statements:

There is an urgent need for vocational education leadership to increase skills to interpret and

communicate the purpose and goals of vocational education more explicitly and logically...

There appears to be a need for a broad-based re-examination of the underlying premises that support philosophic rationale for vocational education. Some of these circumstances creating this need include:

1. the inability of the field as a whole to react to adverse critics of vocational education,
2. the inability of vocational educators to proactively map out future direction based on theoretical bases which have gained consensual acceptance within the field,
3. a lack of discussion and debate within the field regarding philosophic premises and issues, and
4. a failure to articulate a philosophic position and communicate it to other educational groups, to Congress, federal agencies and to the general public.

The need for this workshop was supported by some of the same rationale previously mentioned in this paper: the statement by Charles Law and the call for a national policy presented by the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education. In addition the response by Marvin Feldman to the Grubb and Lazerson article in the HARVARD EDUCATIONAL REVIEW, entitled "The Greening of Vocational Education" was used as supporting evidence for the need for a national policy for vocational education. In Feldman's May 1976 address to the joint meeting of the National and State Advisory Councils on Vocational Education in Washington, D.C., he made the following statement:

We need a new outreach to the nation's thought leaders. We need a new rationale, solidly rooted in sound scholarship. We need a coherent national policy (for vocational education).

Clearly, Feldman has made a major shift from his earlier position regarding a national policy for vocational education. In the September 5, 1978 issue of THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION in an article by Feldman entitled "We Must Prepare Students for Work, Not Jobs" he states:

We in vocational education have been saying for the last few years that what we desperately need is national policy for vocational education. I am moving away from that point of view. Perhaps we are less in need of a policy of education than of a policy of work. (p. 56)

This brief and contemporary background on the issue of policy for vocational education almost brings us to the present time. Pautler (1978) in a article in the May 1978 issue of THE AMERICAN VOCATIONAL JOURNAL entitled "Is There a Need for a National Policy for Vocational Education" again brought the issue of philosophy and policy to the attention of the American Vocational Association. Pautler stated the following:

I firmly believe that there is a need for a national policy for vocational education in the United States. It appears that the already mentioned groups--AVA, the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education, the State Directors of Vocational Education, and others feel the same way and are gearing up to do something about it. But unless there is cohesion among these groups, we may end up with four or more attacks on the policy problem, resulting in four or more policy statements. This would only continue our current position, not improve it. (p. 12)

It was as a result of this article that the request was made to make a presentation to the National Association of State Directors of Vocational Education at their meetings held during the AVA conference in Dallas during December 1978. This paper resulted from that request for a presentation dealing with "The Need for a National Policy for Vocational Education."

We would be remiss not to mention some other intervening activities and publications to bring the situation as much up-to-date as possible.

(1) THE QUEST FOR A NATIONAL MANPOWER POLICY FRAMEWORK (1976)

This special Report of the National Commission for Manpower Policy should not go unnoticed by vocational educators. We have over the past several years tried to carefully monitor the work of this Commission chaired by no one less prestigious than Eli Ginzberg. One need only view the schema presented on page 19 of the document under discussion to get a basic idea of how manpower people view vocational education. We encourage you to keep a record of manpower developments in this country. We realize that State Directors of

Vocational Education are very much aware of the situation both nationally and within their respective states, however, we are not sure if that holds true for the other members of our profession. Please take the time to read this report.

(2) ISSUES AND POLICY IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (1977)

This booklet by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Career Education, by Carol Kowle has attempted to review some of the background and issues associated with philosophy and policy. It has, however, only scratched the surface and raised more questions than it could ever hope to answer.

(3) TOWARD A FEDERAL POLICY ON EDUCATION AND WORK (1977)

This work by Barry E. Stern, Office of Deputy Assistant Secretary for Education/Policy Development of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare should not go unnoticed by those associated with vocational education. This document as is stated in the preface, "is merely a planning tool (not a plan) for HEW in this particular area" (page vi). It is interesting reading and should be given careful consideration by those interested in policy formulation.

(4) A POLICY FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

This "state of the art" paper by Paul Brader, U.S. Department of Commerce is soon to be published by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education.

(5) AN EXPANDED PHILOSOPHY FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Another "state of the art" paper is this one by David Stevin, Department of Economics, University of Missouri, also to soon be published by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education.

It should be apparent to those interested in philosophy, principles, and policy for vocational education that within the last three years a good deal of activity has taken place. However, it appears to us that the efforts to date have been very widely dispersed among a number of groups with vested interests in the subject. No attempt has been made to bring all concerned with the issue of policy together to discuss the issue in an open session. Perhaps it is true, as stated earlier, that our profession has not matured sufficiently to have mutual agreement regarding commonality of terms associated with our major business, namely the delivery of vocational services to those in need of such service.

This situation is even more complicated when viewed from the other side of the fence, namely from the Department of Labor side, and its role in the area of human resources development. There is

no question about the fact of the involvement of the Department of Labor in vocational education in the United States. We seem to be seeing more and more of its involvement in an ever widening variety of programs for a variety of clients.

It all seems to end in a very simple system. How do students of clients exit from any school or training program? We see three basic ways of exiting from any form of training program of schooling. They are as follows: First, some exit to still more education and or training. That is usually considered a success. Second, some exit directly or within a short period of time to work in the form of a paid job. That is usually considered a success. Third, some exit to neither a job or more schooling. These individuals end up in the pool of the unemployed. This is not considered a success. When this third exit path results and if the path was from a public educational agency program, the individual now becomes a client for the Department of Labor and may well end up in a CETA program.

As we move ahead on the issues of philosophy, principles, and policy for vocational education we must not do so in a vacuum. We must consider the role of vocational education and its relationship to the total field of human resources development within our country.

The idea of real cooperation is well expressed in the following verses:

Two Missouri mules--say get this dope,
Were tied together with a piece of rope.
Said one to the other, "You come my way,
While I take a nibble at this new-mown hay."
"I won't," said the other, "You come with me,
For I, too, have some hay, you see."
So they got nowhere, just stomped the dirt.
And, Oh, by golly! how that rope did hurt.

Then they faced about, these stubborn mules,
And said, "We're nothing but two human fools,
Let's pull together; I'll go your way,
Then you come mine, and they liked it, too,
And they swore to be comrades, ever true.
And as the sun went down, they were heard to bray,
"This is the end of a perfect day." -- Anonymous

CHAPTER III

NATIONAL LEADERS SURVEY ON THE ISSUE OF POLICY

In preparing for this challenge and assignment it was decided to conduct a rather informal data gathering procedure. Eight open ended questions were prepared dealing with philosophy and policy for vocational education. A cover letter along with a listing of the eight questions was mailed to 23 individuals that we consider nationally significant and informed people regarding vocational education. Sixteen out of the 23 responded to our questionnaire. Among those surveyed were State Directors of Vocational Education (2 out of 5 responded); members of Congress or Congressional staff member (3 out of 6 responded); university professors of vocational education (6 out of 7 responded); staff members of USOE, NIE, and NACVE (5 out of 5 responded). We fully realize the limitations of our data gathering procedures and the informal nature of our procedures, but, the responses were sincere, direct and in many cases very different. Since we did not indicate that we were going to include this data in our paper, we are not in a position to identify the respondent with any quote. A listing of the 23 people we sent our questionnaire to is included.

What follows is simply the questions that we asked with some condensed responses directly taken from the responses for each of the eight questions. We use this to show the widely differing points of view regarding a national policy for vocational education or a lack of a national policy.

1. Do we have a current national policy for vocational education? Is it written or unwritten? What is it and/or where can it be located?

National policy for vocational education is established in its broadest sense by the Congress of the United States through the legislative process. New vocational legislation is passed or amended as necessary due to changing National needs. The State Plan process provides the States the flexibility necessary to establish local policy to meet local needs within the overall National policy necessary to serve the needs of National well being.

We do not have a national policy as such except that which is written or implied in national legislation. The best source for policy is the reports of the Federal Board for vocational education. But there are some problems:

My conception is that from philosophy we derive certain principles. These principles do not change, but from time to time we must interpret these principles because of changes in the Social, Economic, Technological, and Educational structure of the nation. I believe that all of the basic principles were discovered during the period 1906-1917. (This is complicated because some people want to call certain administrative decisions policy--I believe that this is merely an interpretation of a principle (according to the four factors above) and not policy.)

There are only two types of nationally adopted policies on vocational education of which I am aware:

- a. Legislative. Stated in PL 94-482, Title I, Part A, Declaration of Purpose, Section 101.
- b. Professional. Stated in AVA Program of Work and Resolutions. There is also an unstated policy of gaining maximum increases in Federal expenditures for vocational education with minimum restrictions on their use.

We do have a National policy for vocational education although we may not like it! It is written in the Federal Acts (especially Rules and Regulations and the State Plans). To think this is not policy--just try to get a State Plan approved that does not follow or ignores the Federal Rules and Regulations.

The only national policy relating to vocational education is that implied by the continuing vocational education acts which include the continuation of the initial Smith Hughes Act as continuing appropriations. This federal legislation in a sense was based on the policy that vocational education was in the national interest and therefore worthy of investment of federal funds. In recent years, however, the funding of vocational education has not been so much based upon national policy as it has been on political activities in much the same manner as other educational legislation, such as the ESEA Act which is not based upon a national policy, but upon a social/welfare thrust.

It would seem to me that a national policy for vocational education will address the issue of the national interest in vocational education and might not relate to a total philosophy of vocational education. A common philosophy for vocational education, however, developed through the American Vocational Association, could serve as the basis for identifying the national interest in vocational education and in relating the national efforts to such a philosophy. I would relate the word "policy" to a concept of goals and means of implementing such goals in terms of identifying an agency of federal government which would relate to

the states the functions of such an agency in implementing the goals and investment pattern of federal funds in relationship to goals and agency functions.

I believe that the development of a national policy for vocational education must emanate either from the national administration through the office of the President, or through Congress. Other agencies, such as AVA, state directors, and NACVE can be of assistance in the development of such policies, but nothing can be construed to be a national policy unless it is developed by or formally accepted by Congress and the office of the President.

I believe that the development of national policies in relationship to all education, including vocational education, is essential if our nation is to continue to grow and prosper. The issues that we face are not short-term and the social and economic issues of our day cannot be solved without significant changes in and support from our public education system, including vocational education.

In my opinion, we do not have a clearly stated or understood national policy for vocational education. The nearest thing to a policy would have to be extracted from recent federal legislation relating to vocational education - PL 94-482. In my opinion, this bill is so confusing and contradictory that it is difficult to identify any consistent policy or direction.

You probably already know where I stand on this question. Of course we have a national policy. It is clearly outlined in the 1976 Vocational Education Amendments. The Vocational Education legislation explicitly outlines goals, objectives, and priorities and as such, constitutes in and of itself a comprehensive National policy.

2. If in your opinion we do have a national policy, is it adequate at the present time?

In my opinion, we do not have an adequate national policy at this time.

Let me first here reiterate that what I am expressing are my personal judgments and they should not be misconstrued as representing Administration policy. The answer to the question of the adequacy of our national policy depends upon your definition of adequacy. As you know, in recent years we have had an increase in federal directives along with a relative decrease in federal financial support. While the legislation has formulated essential policy priorities, many believe, and I am among them, that it is overly perscriptive.

The policy and direction established by Congress in the Vocational Act is very detailed and probably adequate as it defines over all purpose and National priorities and thrusts of the program. However, the Act needs to be interpreted for ease of understanding by the many publics interested in vocational education.

I doubt that we do have an up to date national policy, but we should have one that is updated--that is the principles are reinterpreted from time to time to fit the social, economic, technological, and educational conditions. First I think that we need a general understanding of the principles of vocational education and then on that basis develop policy which can be used to implement the principles. When I first started to teach vocational education I could only enroll in my evening classes employed persons, but when attention to unemployed persons became important it was in the national interest to change our policy so we could meet the needs of unemployed persons. This was a change in policy, not in principle.

Is the policy adequate? If policy, as Wenrich says, "policy means those formulations or broad goals or purposes usually developed outside the schools, often by laymen, that hopefully, with information provided by professional educators"

I suppose we must accept it as adequate. Being educators first, and vocational educators second, it is not unnatural that we should be somewhat dissatisfied with present policy. Some of us do not think it is all encompassing enough (like our lack of involvement with CETA), and others of us believe it is too broad and not specific enough (such as making the vocational component even more emphasized in the total career education concept).

While there is no clearly defined policy for vocational education, there is again expressed in the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976, principles of vocational education as related to what Congress believes to be the national interest. It should be remembered that education is a responsibility of the state, not the national level and the federal government will enter into the issue of philosophy and policy only as it relates to a national interest.

3. Do you believe that we have a clearly defined philosophy of vocational education? What is it? Where can it be located?

I do not feel we have a clearly defined philosophy of vocational education. The National Association of State Directors of Vocational Education developed materials as a result of their annual meeting in Snowmass, Colorado, several years ago which comes close to identifying a philosophy of vocational education. Personally, I believe this material comes very close to being representative of the belief of the state directors. Since the philosophy does not exist in any statutes, I do not believe it can be considered to be a national philosophy. Rather, it is a philosophy of a group of state directors of vocational education.

No. The Workshop for Interpreting Vocational Education, March 8-10, 1976, distributed a volume which contains some approaches to philosophy.

Mel Barlow maintains that we have a philosophy of vocational education, that it was enunciated by Allen, Prosser and other leaders, and that it has never changed. Obviously, I think that it has changed (it seems to me that even Prosser's writings indicate profound change), and that it will continue to change. Moreover, I believe that the different service areas have somewhat different philosophies.

Philosophy and policy are not the same as you know. Philosophy should undergird our policy. It seems to me that philosophy deals with our fundamental beliefs and should be much broader than our policies. It has been said that the philosophy of vocational education changed in the early sixties as a result of the Panel of Consultants and their report. Policy was not changed until passage of the Act of 1963.

Philosophy certainly can vary from individual to individual--based upon one's orientation (from whence he came), but it is essentially embodied in the historical perspective of the movement. Undoubtedly it is rather well documented in publications and public documents.

Policy grows out of philosophy. A widely accepted American philosophy is that of equality of opportunity in education. It is a philosophy that upholds the principle that everyone is educable. Congressional emphasis on program improvement, effective curriculum development, teacher training, and the servicing of disadvantaged and handicapped youth and adult populations is clearly a national policy of vocational education. It is a policy that grows out of a philosophy that emphasizes quality education, and the serving of disadvantaged populations.

The Vocational Act and the regulations reflect a basic philosophy but lacks the statements of philosophy which provides the back up and rational for the policy. The philosophy of vocational

education is to be found in the legislative and programmatic history and therefore is as diverse as the students of that history.

No. I doubt that we have, or can have, a philosophy of vocational education. We do borrow heavily from a number of philosophies--we are eclectic in the matter of philosophy--The best we can do is to start from principles, develop a policy on that basis, change the policy frequently.

4. What relationship(s) do you believe should exist between a philosophy of vocational education and a national policy for vocational education?

The only connecting link between a philosophy, which doesn't exist, or a composite of ideas borrowed from many philosophies, are the principles. If I understand the principles then I can generate policy and can change the policy as the need arises.

National policy should reflect a sound National philosophy.

As you know Charles Law wrote a paper challenging our claim to having a logical philosophy base upon which to build policy. I believe he did us a real favor in bringing forth such a statement although I do not agree with him. Shoemaker and some others responded to him. And the conference Katie Greenwood conducted a couple of years ago targeted on the whole question of philosophy.

In my opinion, national policy should emanate from a clearly defined philosophy.

The philosophy (or philosophies) of vocational education should guide policy (or policies) for vocational education. If Barlow is right, we already have the guides we need. I believe, however, that philosophies and policies are changing in philosophy, even though the change may not have been stated.

5. How would you define the word "policy?"

Now, you got me. This is an almost impossible task because we have never had any particular agreement upon what the word policy really means. It is obviously a general statement, or point of view, that would guide us in developing vocational education programs. One of the program policy statements we developed was "Vocational education shall be provided to the extent that all individuals leaving or graduating from educational institutions will have had the opportunity to obtain a saleable skill." If this is really a policy statement than I would accept it as a guiding tool to help me organize educational programs. However, as you know, a great many people, even in vocational education would not agree with it.

Policy is the governing principle for implementing -
and should reflect a sound philosophy.

Policy, in the sense that you are using it, is analogous to strategy. It defines objectives and the basic means for achieving those objectives. Unfortunately, many people use the same word in a way that is analogous to tactics. They refer to the day by day management and, administrative procedures used to achieve policy in the sense that you use it.

While a philosophy lays out general principles, a policy gives more specific direction to this general principle. As Webster defines policy, it is "course of action selected in light of given conditions to guide present and future decisions." It is clear that the 1976 Vocational Education amendments emerged from a national philosophy of education and established a national policy for vocational education. The legislation goes beyond both philosophy and policy in its suggestion of research and development direction. Gene Bottoms, when he was Director of the Division of Program Staff Development in the State of Georgia summarized the research and development emphasis with the 1976 vocational education amendments in his pamphlet, "Implications of the New Vocational Education Legislation for Program Research and Development," published by the Center for Vocational Education, in Ohio. I have enclosed for your information his summary table.

The definition of policy--"The principles on which any measure or course of action is based."
(Webster's New Encyclopedia Dictionary).

6. What groups or group do you believe should be involved in the development of a national policy for vocational education? (AVA; State Directors; NACVE; Congress; etc.)

Congress, I believe, should establish National policy using the legislative process which provides for input from all groups including professional vocational educators (AVA, State Directors, NACVE, etc.). The profession (AVA, State Directors and NACVE) should then interpret and clarify and promote other activities to promote understanding, and, to the degree practical, uniformity.

Obviously many groups. I think it would be appropriate for AVA to seek a large fund from vocational education research funds (The National Research Council said that we should spend some of our research funds in this way) and in cooperation with NACVE produce two documents. First, the principles of vocational education, and second, the policy as of the time it was written. Provision must be made to review and revise policy from time to time. Development of the two documents would involve a large number of people throughout the nation. Such a contract should not be given to an individual in a University, but to a professional association - this is a professional matter. Of course university personnel would have much input to such a document. As an AVA member, you, for example could assist AVA in developing the document for funding, and could have a principal role in developing such a document.

All of the groups that you name should be involved in the development of policy. In a pluralistic society it is essential that basic policy questions be formulated on a wide information base. As I have indicated, the key policy formulator has been Congress. As you know our congressional process, includes extensive public hearings, thus allowing input from a wide variety of interest groups, from advocacy groups to professional associations.

Any National policy should involve all groups in its formulation. It is here that the University Council for Vocational Education should come forth and have some input--that is why I feel that the Council should become a potent force in the future. I guess we have left policy formulation pretty much up to the AVA and the state directors. This should no longer be the case.

I believe the American Vocational Association could be the initiating agency group for the development of national policy. Certainly the State Directors, as an affiliate of AVA, should be closely involved. I would think that once a philosophy statement has

been drafted, NACVE and other appropriate agencies should have an opportunity to respond to the draft. Ultimately, Congress should reaffirm the policy in implementing future federal legislation.

As our professional organization, AVA must be, and is, involved in policy formation. The more professional the vocational educator, the more he/she will be involved in policy formation. As vocational educators, state directors are involved in national policy formation. As administrators they are involved in formation of state policy. Congress is involved in policy formation for Federally reimbursed vocational education (a large part of vocational education). NACVE and other advisory committees affect policy indirectly by criticizing existing policy and suggesting new policy.

7. What would be the advantages in having a generally accepted policy for vocational education in the United States?

Generally accepted policy would provide a more consistent direction for the various states. Hopefully, also, it would provide the basis to more successfully generate support for the program of vocational education.

The most obvious advantage is that all of the vocational education personnel would be singing the same tune from the same hymnal. I keep running into new people in the field and have the feeling that they are unsure just what the mission of vocational education is.

A generally accepted policy, if adopted, would provide the basis on which program output could be evaluated. Vocational education's present vulnerability is largely due to the fact that each critic measures vocational education using his or her own philosophy and concepts of what the National policy is or should be as a basis for measurement.

The advantages of having a generally accepted policy for Vocational Education in the United States is that quite obviously consensus would allow for greater coordination and the more effective use of resources. A national policy that was sufficiently supported by federal resources would provide substantial technical assistance and greatly facilitate state and local administrators in their development of programs and products.

If policy was generally accepted--it would mean that a coalition of the forces would have to agree before it is written. Although I think this is possible even with the post-secondary people, maybe a more important starting step is to obtain consensus as to what should be our present philosophy. For example, if we can get agreement philosophically that all vocational education should be open to all age groups (thus squelching the idea that kids can not make career choices until post-secondary) then we might be able to develop policy which will square with our philosophy.

The principal advantage would be that we would necessarily have a philosophy of vocational education which was accepted generally. (Sometimes I think you mean a national philosophy when you say a national policy.) A disadvantage might be that it could hamper innovation.

8. Would you care to share your ideas on how the profession might go about the development of a national policy for vocational education?

In my opinion, the document "Policy-Making for Vocational Education," which was prepared under the direction of Dr. Melvin L. Barlow, Division of Vocational Education, University of California, Los Angeles, in November 1975, is an excellent document to start with. I think the document also provides at least one approach to developing policy.

I have indicated above that I think that the establishment of National policy is rightly the responsibility of Congress using the legislative process which provides for input by the profession. I would like to see the profession concentrate on the development of a National philosophy which would serve as a sound basis for a National policy and if done would have future impact on a National policy. To accomplish this would be a major undertaking and the effect should be led by the professional organization (The AVA) involving all segments and administrative levels of the profession.

It is obvious from the question that you and I disagree. It is my opinion that there presently is a national policy of vocational education and as I have previously indicated that policy is clearly stated in the legislation. What we are lacking is sufficient resources to provide the technical assistance necessary for states to adequately achieve these policy objectives. As I have previously indicated, it is my opinion that the legislation is overly prescriptive and simultaneously fails to provide the necessary resources to assist the state and local agencies in their implementation of the legislation. I am suggesting greater federal resources to provide technical assistance along with sufficient state and local autonomy to allow the practitioner to determine the specifics of program implementation.

A system for developing National policy is already in existence. The fact that hearings are held, inputs made by various groups, etc. is working, but we need to tackle the philosophical question first with our counterparts and get agreement at this point (CETA, post-secondary, guidance, etc.). We seem to be only too willing to ignore the philosophical step and be willing to move directly into a conflict arena in terms of policy making (which incidentally is written and well spelled out). Maybe we should write more and keep updated our philosophy.

I believe the AVA or some lay group should launch us into such an endeavor. It certainly has to be broader than those in the profession. Maybe the Carnegie Corporation, Ford Foundation, National Advisory Council, etc. could assist?

Work on philosophy first, through AVA, which could be criticized (preferably constructively) by each of the other groups you mention.

It was with the results of this rather informal survey of leaders in the field of vocational education that we began to establish our own position dealing with the need for a national policy for vocational education. No doubt we were somewhat influenced by some of the results of our survey and this may very well be reflected in our paper.

Our appreciation is expressed to the sixteen out of the twenty-three whose names appear who provided us with information and points of view on the issues being discussed in this paper. Thanks to the sixteen who took the time to help.

Jacob Javits, Charles Radcliffe, Albert Quie, John Jennings, Jerome Moss, Rupert Evans, Grant Venn, Melvin Barlow, Ralph Wenrich, Carl Schaefer, Ralph Bregman, Charles Buzzell, Richard Carlson, Robert Taylor, Henry David, Charles Law, Monty Multanen, William Wenzel, Byrl Shoemaker, Samuel Barrett, Edward Kennedy, Jack Kemp, George Copa.

CHAPTER IV

POLICY IN A WORLD OF CHANGE

It should be recognized that such questions as "Do we have or need a philosophy or policy of vocational education?" are ill-conceived questions. Of course vocational education has both philosophies and policies; indeed, so many that it is hard to keep up with them. The real question is whether the practice of vocational education, and the philosophies and policies behind that practice are adequate to meet the changes that face us today. The answer for an increasing number of vocational educators is "No, they are not adequate."

That may be disturbing, for reading the philosophies and statements which have guided us for some decades, one finds little with which to argue. We seem to have captured motherhood and virtue with consummate skill. But virtue is held to be unchanging and the world is not. In simple terms, society and the characteristics of people in it have changed dramatically since the Smith-Hughes Act was passed in 1917. Our policies and philosophies have not.

In 1917, perhaps it was possible to conceive of the world and vocational education in simple categorical terms. The dominant forces appeared to be immigration, industrialization, creeping urbanization, and promotion of the idea that education for the world of work was as important as academic education.

Equality demanded that everyone be given an opportunity in the melting pot. But it was a melting pot in which diversity among the wave of immigrants was to be met by a homogenizing process called Americanization. After all, people do have to speak English. But there was more to it than that. America's future, and the future of her citizens lay with industrialization and the progress it implied. Both immigrants and native-born Americans had to learn the skills needed by the economic system.

There was nothing insensitive or heartless about this. Psychology had showed us that people learned by conditioning. Pavlov's dogs proved it. Vocational guidance was emerging as trait-factor theory. Success in vocational education was a matter of matching people to the roles and jobs for which their traits suited them. Not only the traits of people, but job skills seemed to lend themselves to categorical definition. Geography and social structure also played a role, as it does now. Those who lived on the farm would be trained in agriculture. Those who lived in the city would find their future with trade and industry. And women would be trained

for their special place in the home; the economic role of which was recognized as home economics. For everyone, the economic system was there with opportunities unbounded.

Vocational education organized itself according to what seemed to be the socio-economic structure of the day, and the new principles of economic and management science. In the phrase "vocational education," the emphasis was on the word vocational. Its mission was training people for employment, and its criterion of success was the number of people who successfully entered the fields for which they were trained. Vocational education, like education in general, adopted the management principles of industry. Standardized programs were established and the delivery system of schools was designed for mass production.

Such a description may raise justified howls of protest. Of course vocational education was sensitive to the needs of individuals. Students were not treated as homogeneous masses nor in categorical terms. This paper does not dispute the fact that individual educators have always been sensitive to people or that the principles of vocational education were broader in concept than the foregoing discussion would imply. But the intent of this discussion is to point out some beliefs and tendencies in the society of the first half of this century which led to inflexible patterns of response which are not capable of dealing with quite opposite conditions in the last half of the century.

Principles of Vocational Education

Every statement of principle defines an expected role for vocational educators, and assumes something about the conditions under which that role is played. If the expectations and assumptions are not confirmed in the reality of social change and individual commitment, we have no real principles or philosophy at all. Examining the principles of vocational education, Law (1978) claimed:

The philosophical bases upon which vocational education loosely operates are a conglomerate of beliefs; indiscriminately interwoven; parts of which are mutually exclusive and often contradictory. (p. iii)

. . . Perhaps the philosophical base of vocational education is not so much nonexistent as it is schizophrenic. (p. 26)

In contrast to Law's view, there is a publication called Policy Making for Vocational Education. It was prepared by the Division of Vocational Education at the University of California under the direction of Melvin Barlow and was published in 1975. It states that:

Principles are basic truths, laws or assumptions which determine the intrinsic nature or behavior of vocational education. Principles serve as the basis for policy and are inextricably bound to the economy, labor force and social structure. (p. 4)

The booklet listed twenty principles, approximately half of which described relationships between vocational education and society or business, and about half described the processes of vocational education in relationship to students. The booklet did not indicate for any particular principle whether it was founded on truth or law or assumptions; and it does not matter for the purposes of this discussion. The following five principles can serve our purpose.

1. Vocational education is concerned with the growth of the individual.
2. Vocational education contributes to the concept that an individual's occupation is a major cohesive force in the continuity of that individual's life.
3. Vocational education provides for the unique needs, experiences and varying abilities of individuals.
4. Vocational education provides opportunities for individuals to discover and develop their vocational interests and abilities and to be assisted toward placement in the occupations for which they received instruction.
5. Vocational education develops work attitudes, saleable skills and useable knowledge related to employment. (pp. 4-6)

Do Law's conclusions also apply to this specific set of five principles? Are they schizophrenic, mutually exclusive or contradictory? In a logical or psychological sense they are not. In descending specificity we recognize that the total growth of the individual is always involved; that work in our society is potentially a cohesive force in individual life; that choosing meaningful work requires identification and development of unique characteristics of the individual; and that actual entry into paid employment requires the development of proper work attitudes and saleable skills.

It might be hypothesized that these principles are not themselves schizophrenic, but they lead to schizophrenia when an attempt is made to translate them into practice. Vocational educators can accept these propositions in principle and belief. But under the diverse conditions

in which their implied role is played, they cannot share them in the only sense that makes sharing possible: in commitment, practice and responsibility. The reason for this is not that vocational educators are dominated by self-interest or do not care. This set of principles is not consistent with the structure and capability of vocational education in practice. Vocational educators are currently equipped to deal with training in specific job skills. They are not equipped to deal with vocational development (now called career education) or with total growth and development.

Such comments were recently made before a group of vocational education teachers. It is interesting that it aroused immediate protest. Without exception they argued that they did concern themselves with personality development and pointed out countless ways in which they attempted to help students with various aspects of that development. It was necessary to point out that the assertion was not intended to ignore the efforts of individual teachers, but rather to note that neither vocational development nor total development has ever been incorporated into the formal curriculum, and that if an attempt was made to do so, they would find it impossible to allocate the time to both developmental factors and job skill training. From a broader perspective of what vocational development and other aspects of total development really implies, they agreed that adequate treatment of such growth was not possible under existing conditions.

In the discussion of philosophy, it will be asserted that to be effective in guiding practice, a principle must be consistent with the various factors which make performance possible. The same principle can be derived from an input-output analysis of the vocational education process. The five principles previously listed represent an increasing scope of responsibility. Each increase imposes requirements for an expanded knowledge base, increased capability to assess individual needs, and increasing flexibility to respond to the diversity which needs assessment uncovers. When one examines the role expectations implied by each statement of principle, and the assumptions it makes about performance conditions, it is easy to see how our principles can lead to schizophrenia.

The Job Training Paradigm: Its Roles and Assumptions

For purposes of analysis, assume that the role of vocational education is to be narrowly confined to the training of people for jobs. Its success is to be measured by the number of graduates who are subsequently employed in the fields for which they are trained. Under what conditions can this role be effectively carried out? Conversely, what changes in conditions would require a role expansion and a new set of capabilities? Assume that the job training role is carried out in the school-setting characterized by a prestructured curriculum, a classroom organization with 20-30 students, and the process of learning being predominately under the direction and control of the teacher. The performance of the teacher will be measured by performance of the students in the job skills taught.

Input Assumptions. Whether or not one cares to describe the school setting in terms of the industrial model of mass production, it is nonetheless true that it shares a common characteristic regarding input specifications. As long as students (input) must move through a predetermined and common process at approximately the same rate, an attempt must be made to standardize the input. A manufacturer of abrasives must insure that his raw materials of sand, silica and other minerals meet precise specifications. The slightest variation in purity or composition will result in the final product not meeting quality control standards. In education, this same concern over raw materials is expressed in the fact that students must have the motivation and necessary prerequisites for training.

The restriction of the vocational educator's role to job skill training assumes that he will deal only with students who meet input specifications necessary for him to fulfill his role. The abrasives manufacturer is not equipped to refine impure shipments of silica. In the same way, the traditional vocational education teacher is not equipped to teach students how to read . . . at least not if he is to be evaluated at the end of the program on the student's acquisition of job skills. Such a condition exceeds the parameters of his role and capability. It follows then, that students who enroll in programs whose mission is job skill training must have characteristics similar to the following:

1. Students must have the prerequisite skills of learning, i.e., they must be able to read, write, analyze, and organize materials.
2. Students must have some variably defined academic preparation in mathematics, science or industrial arts.
3. Students must have the aptitude and physical qualifications needed for learning and performing the skills required on the job.
4. Students must have the necessary personal and work ethics demanded in the work environment. (While the vocational educator has some latitude in shaping the work ethic, he may be helpless in the face of dishonesty, drug abuse or emotional disturbance.)
5. Students must have sufficient interest and motivation to sustain them during the period of training.
6. Students must have the intention of taking employment in the field for which they are being trained. This implies some maturity in vocational decision making.

This set of specifications provides an opportunity to examine two other principles set forth in the 1975 publication on policy.

1. Vocational education is for those individuals who need it, want it, and are able to profit by it.
2. Vocational education is appropriate for all individuals without regard to sex, creed, religion, race, geographical location or physical or mental handicaps. (p. 5)

The first principle was formulated during the period between the Smith-Hughes Act and the Vocational Education Act of 1963. The second principle was formulated afterward. There has been a shift in policy, from dealing with people who can satisfy the input specifications to a concern for all people. One might add a particular concern over the culturally disadvantaged, the handicapped, and minority groups who are not being given equal access to opportunities in our society. Combine these factors with the general deterioration in basic skills of reading and writing, the lack of vocational decision-making skills, the impact of mass communication on study habits and social values, and it is apparent that most of the input specifications necessary to sustain the confined role of training for jobs are being violated.

In principle, most systems have abandoned selective enrollment and turned to a policy of open enrollment. However, as Pautler (1978) has noted, open enrollment may be more myth than reality. The structure and capacity of vocational education has not changed sufficiently to adapt to the new conditions. Demand for vocational education has exceeded capacity, and in practice, vocational education is becoming a "selective form of education." The net effect, however, is to plant the seeds of schizophrenia within the profession and earn the condemnation of those outside it.

Process Assumptions and Conditions. It should be briefly noted, that even under the assumptions of a standardized input, it is not necessarily true that students will learn at the same rate which the standardized process implies. As Bloom (1968) has pointed out, mastery learning requires abandonment of teacher controlled scheduling of learning in groups. Gentile, Frazier and Morris (1973) comment:

This last point of moving on to new materials before prerequisite materials have been mastered is probably the greatest single failing of educational systems. If a student has not mastered a skill that is prerequisite to mastering a higher order skill, it should not be surprising that he falters at the next level. Yet the lock-step process of much of education moves all students at the same rate through a curriculum, plotting each person's performance against that of his peers or

against some national norm. Though such comparisons may be useful for some purposes, they are irrelevant to the individual's actual progress, which depends on his own mastery of each component of the skill being learned.
(p. 35)

Following its unique emphasis on individual projects and practice, vocational education is less guilty of this fault than most educational systems. Nonetheless, it should be noted that only a small portion of vocational education takes place in shop environments or in schools with vocational-oriented methodology. The majority of students classified vocational, are enrolled in business, distributive education and other courses which are heavily dependent upon cognitive learning. These are most often offered in the setting of traditional academic secondary schools.

Output Assumptions and Conditions. The effectiveness of the job training paradigm ultimately rests on the assumptions that: the skills being taught are indeed those required on the job; that jobs will exist; and that the student, in having learning the attitudes and skills derived from job analysis, will indeed find conditions which lead to satisfaction with his work.

It is probably obvious that in one way or another, every one of the assumptions that sustain vocational education in the dominant role of job skill training have been violated by changes in social conditions. New principles have been formulated to recognize such changes, but they have served primarily to widen the gap between what is held to be the philosophy of vocational education and its capability in practice.

It can be argued that the society which faces vocational education today reflects a reversal: from acceptance of standardization to a cry for the recognition of diversity and difference; from a world of relative simplicity categorically arranged, to a world of complexity in which both its structure and process present a challenge to anyone attempting to capture a stable reality in words.

The individual and cultural diversity resulting from immigration is no longer considered something to be standardized or socialized. Conformity and standardization have become such overwhelming forces, that remaining differences are protected as the last vestige upon which individual identity and life can be based. Differences are even elevated to the key for defining the path to individual development and fulfillment.

As the trend toward centralization and standardization in industry formerly reinforced socialization in the melting pot, now rapid change in technology and work patterns promotes the idea of increasing differentiation between people. Specialization demands increasing

precision in identification of individual interests, talents and goals. Rather than trait and factor theory, the problem of vocational guidance has turned to developing self-knowledge and sophisticated decision-making skills.

Implications for Policy and Philosophy

Even these aspects of the problem obscure the more fundamental task which faces us. The framework from which all philosophy and policy develop is the interaction of man and his society. Having said that, so what? The first point is that our concern for re-defining philosophy and policy is not an abstract, academic exercise. It reflects realistic concern over the ways in which society has changed; the ways individuals develop in the midst of that change; and the ways in which meaningful self-world relationships can be established. Much of the uncertainty and confusion in vocational education springs from the realization that our traditional boundaries are based on the past and are too narrow and separated from what is going on around us. Students are not finding what they are led to expect. Neither are many other people who find the American economic dream somewhat tarnished.

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 eliminated categorical funding for programs and admonished vocational educators to get in tune with the needs of people - not only students enrolled in vocational education, but with the large numbers of people for whom meaningful work in society had yet to become a reality. Vocational education has not responded very well. The studies of 1968 criticized vocational education delivery systems and pointed out the complexity of vocational development and career decision making. This led to the career education movement. But vocational educators while recognizing the importance of the problem and that it had consequences for its own success, have failed to become actively involved. Instead, the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education (NACVE) in its 8th Annual Report (September, 1974) recommended separate funding for vocational and career education and advocated:

That policymakers and legislators recognize that career education and vocational education are not synonymous. The curriculum development being done in the name of career education, which is largely concerned with orientation into the work ethic at the elementary and secondary levels for students not in vocational programs does not meet the needs of vocational education curriculum, which deals with teaching specific occupational skills.
(p. 6-7)

It is true that there is a difference between the very specific task of learning job skills once vocational maturity has been achieved, and orientation to the work ethic. But it is also true that vocational development refers to a continuum of tasks by which the individual defines himself, his abilities, and the working relationship he will develop with society. The job training paradigm represents a culmination of vocational development tasks, which can succeed only to the extent that vocational development itself succeeds.

Education itself is fragmented into its separate disciplines and programs. The responsibility for vocational development which was previously ignored entirely, has now been similarly fragmented. If people themselves developed piece by piece, perhaps they could adapt themselves to the organizational policy decisions made by educators. But they don't often develop that way, and perhaps it is time for education to learn to adapt to people.

The traditional focus on the world of work in terms of categories of jobs and employment opportunities is being re-examined in the perspective of the social and economic system. We are finding not employment opportunities, but lack of opportunity; not jobs but unemployment; not fixed categories of work but technological obsolescence and new careers - behind which training opportunities lag or are non-existent. The entire fabric of industrialization and mass production is changing, and with it, must change the definition of vocational education.

There is not only domestic unemployment, but global unemployment. Examining the plight of developing nations in comparison to the results of industrialization, Norman (1978) and Sanders, Kahn, Mead and Thompson argue the question of whether the new trend must be toward decentralization and "development of small scale industries that require little capital but employ lots of people." Among vocational educators, Persons (1978) argues that vocational education must shift its view of industry and its views of itself from providing training for jobs to the creation of jobs. He suggests doing this by taking vocational education from the school and bringing it to neighborhoods in the community where training and work go together.

To test such a model requires bold, visionary leadership. For many it will be a cautious step from the known world of creating job seekers to the unfamiliar task of assisting job makers. It will require an initial shift from secondary and postsecondary institutionalized instruction to a community-based adult education program. It will require local vocational education administrators and state leaders who are willing to invest scarce education dollars in non-traditional programs.

We have a problem. It has not gone away. But vocational education has a choice. It can continue to be a side line observer in the struggle to create jobs or it can be part of the solution. The choice is ours. (p. 33)

Feldman (1978) ties job creation to the development of initiative and skills in individuals for creating their own job.

Almost accidentally, my institution has found that it is preparing people to create their own work. A lot of my graduates - I believe an increasing number - start their own business when they leave the Fashion Institute of Technology. We find - retrospectively - that we have not prepared them for jobs. We have prepared them for work. These graduates may, in turn, be providing work - or jobs - for others. (p. 50)

Feldman's point is critical because it ties individual development to our view of the economic system. As Persons, Feldman and others point out, our entire educational system is patterned upon beliefs in the industrialized structures of centralization, mass production, and standardization. This affects not only the delivery system of education, but the attitudes of students. There is a tremendous difference between teaching students how to prepare themselves for prestructured jobs which they may expect to fill, and teaching students that there is meaningful work to be accomplished if only they have the skills to find it, and even create it. The first pattern is one of passive adaptation. The second pattern is one of developing meaningful relationships with, and contributions to, society.

Our focus on human beings as people preparing themselves for jobs, is being re-examined in the perspective of growth and development. Work in America (1973) and countless other publications tell us that the basic motivation to work must be understood in terms of job satisfaction as well as economic necessity. In Maslow's (1954) terms, there is a growth motivation as well as a deficiency motivation. Employers are taking action (although slowly) to restructure work from smaller and smaller specialized tasks to those jobs which entail challenge, responsibility and meaningful participation. Vocational education must find a greater balance in its attempt to serve the needs of the job market and the needs of people, for even the job market is no longer what it once was.

An Issue: Change of the Ability to Manage It?

One could go on cataloging the nature of the changes that are occurring and the alternative responses to it. But this would miss the essential point. To some large degree, our philosophy, policy and

practice reflect the structure of the changes that are occurring and our interpretation of the problems they imply. But to an even larger degree, our philosophies and policies depend more on something in the way we respond. It lies partly in the way one thinks; the perspective one draws. The problem of vocational development and career education can mean either that we must expand our horizons to address aspects of development beyond job skills, or it can mean that we must be concerned over preserving the traditional structure. The problems of unemployment and dissatisfaction with the world of work can mean reaching out and participating with society itself, or it can mean calling on someone else to do the job.

From the perspective of traditional vocational education, people like Persons, Feldman, Porteus and others appear to be unrealistic. In their perspective of people they emphasize growth, development and personal initiative. In their perspective of employment, they emphasize creating the kinds of social systems which must be developed to promote the welfare of society and the individual. One can say that they are activists and predict their failure. After all, vocational education is not capable of dealing with the total growth and development of people. Nor does vocational education change society, it follows it. Vocational education does not define itself; it can only assume the role which society permits it.

But this is precisely the line of reasoning which requires challenge. The focus of the activist is not only on the structure of changes that are occurring. Their focus is also on the quality of the response. They have anticipated the consequences of change instead of waiting to be overwhelmed by it. They have proposed that vocational education cannot be defined by tradition, legislation or existing structures, no matter how much current funding patterns depend on such matters. For both our students and ourselves, the rules of life in modern society have changed. Meaningful existence demands re-examination of who we are, the tasks to be accomplished, and consideration of how to create our own opportunities for achievement.

Thus we have a problem of philosophy and policy. It is one matter for independent activists to act upon their own beliefs and demonstrate that changes can be made. It is another matter to articulate and communicate their assessments to others so they can be incorporated into a philosophy for vocational education so it can be translated into practice by the system as a whole. In addressing this matter of self-definition, philosophy, or whatever else one cares to call it, it seems important to move away from the specifics of change to the processes by which one deals with change and to the criteria by which effective policy can be judged.

In a stable world, the problems to be solved emerge slowly and the solutions to them may remain applicable for a while. There is the luxury of time. In a rapidly changing world, the criteria of

effectiveness may no longer be found solely in the parameters of the original problem, but also in the processes by which one deals with uncertainty, risk, and change itself. It may be necessary to incorporate into philosophy and policy, the goals of becoming sensitive to change, complexity and diversity; to having the ability to organize and reorganize rapidly; to being able to reach out to what needs doing rather than waiting for realization of our inadequacies to be forced upon us.

CHAPTER V

DO WE NEED POLICY OR SYSTEM DESIGN CONCEPTS?

There is a gap between our principles and our practice. Everyone knows this and everyone has a different explanation: "They won't give us enough resources. 'We don't have an effective economic policy.' We don't have an effective human resources development policy." In the last chapter, it was suggested that a good portion of the gap might be explained by the failure of the principles to be consistent with the reality of change and with the roles or capabilities of people who have to implement them.

In his address to the Bicentennial conference, Henry David (1976) found it necessary to make a related point:

My remarks . . . will not concern the content of either existing or proposed policies for vocational education. I propose, instead, to discuss with you some notions about policy thinking and policy making . . . (p. 2-3)

In policy behavior, problems and situations, in short, are not "givens." They are constructs, artifacts of the mind and feeling . . . to which purpose attaches. They are not found, they are created. Consequently, the problems attacked and the situations acted on in the area of vocational education take on a different shape and complexity if the perspective is, for example, economic and growth policy, or human resource development policy, or educational policy broadly conceived. (p. 11)

David's point was a valid one. The way one defines the problem will have a great deal to do with the kinds of solutions one can find. So the purpose of this chapter is to examine the perspectives vocational educators might be using in attacking the problems and perhaps propose some alternative frameworks.

However, there is a story behind this chapter which deserves telling because it clarifies its intent and perhaps reveals the process of problem definition through which many vocational educators might be passing. The Chairman of Educational Administration at one of our leading universities was asked to read this manuscript and react. We will call him Professor Jones. His comments were disastrous for the authors' egos but invaluable for clarifying what is being

attempted here. One of Professor Jones' views can be summarized as follows. 'Why are you talking about policy and policy processes to an association of vocational educators? Even state directors of vocational education don't make policy. Policy is made by society through a political process. It is legitimate for vocational associations to formulate positions and indeed legislators rely on such professional expertise for guidance. But talk about policy and its processes, principles and so forth is essentially inappropriate for this body.'" Professor Jones suggests that the function of vocational educators working through various associations like AVA is to act as experts and recommend positions to agencies which do have policy making power.

But Professor Jones went on to criticize other aspects of this paper with a constant implication that what was being said was either irrelevant to policy theory or already subsumed by it. The final realization which emerged from hours of interaction and discussion is quite important to convey to the reader. The paramount concern of this paper is not with philosophy and policy as ends in themselves. It is with vocational education perceived as a profession searching for identity and cohesion in a world of change; as a system which must develop the capacity to reach out and interact with society; with a system which must serve individual people regardless of their geographical location, race, sex or handicaps. So Professor Jones was right, this paper does not fit policy frameworks, but it is also possible to recognize that policy frameworks might not have anything to do with effective vocational education.

We have to talk about policy, and policy positions must be developed. But after going through the arduous work of hammering out a set of policy propositions, what has been gained? Will we have a mere collection of words or will we have something that can improve vocational education? To answer that question, one has to consider policy, but try to go beyond the current conceptions of it to capture what the goal of all our activity truly is: the creation of an effective system of vocational education. It must be one which serves a changing society; one which serves any person who needs vocational education; and one which creates cohesion among the diverse members of our profession so they can be more effective.

One might ask, is it possible to address these issues and still make the discussion relevant to those concerned with policy? The question can be answered in this fashion. To be effective, policy must result in a better educational system. If it doesn't, then policy itself is irrelevant. But to result in an improved system, policy must recognize and account for the principles upon which system effectiveness rests and through which policy becomes effective. Therefore, if one can establish those principles of system effectiveness, one can also establish the critical directions for policy itself.

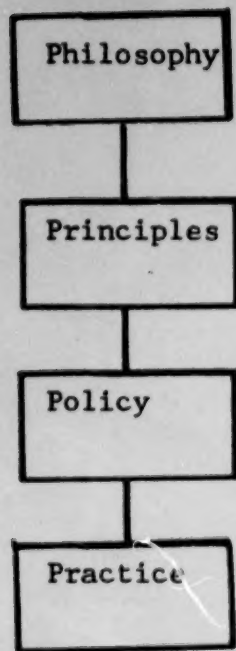
What is being claimed is that the foundations of effective policy is to be found in what might be called principles of system design. This presents a problem of communication. The reader who, like Professor Jones, is embedded in the realities of political processes such as conflict resolution and negotiation may not see the relevance of asking what makes a system effective. The same might be true for the vocational educator concerned with the problems of unemployment, lack of federal funding, and students who can't read or write. But this is what Henry David (1977) was trying to convey. It is necessary to examine the value of the perspectives we bring to whatever process it is that we are going through. Some of these perspectives bearing the labels of policy and philosophy may divert us from what philosophy and policy were meant to accomplish. However, rather than assume that one can leap from current concepts of policy to a concept of system design, it is worthwhile to elaborate on some paradigms which might control our thinking.

Some Dead Issues That Haunt Us

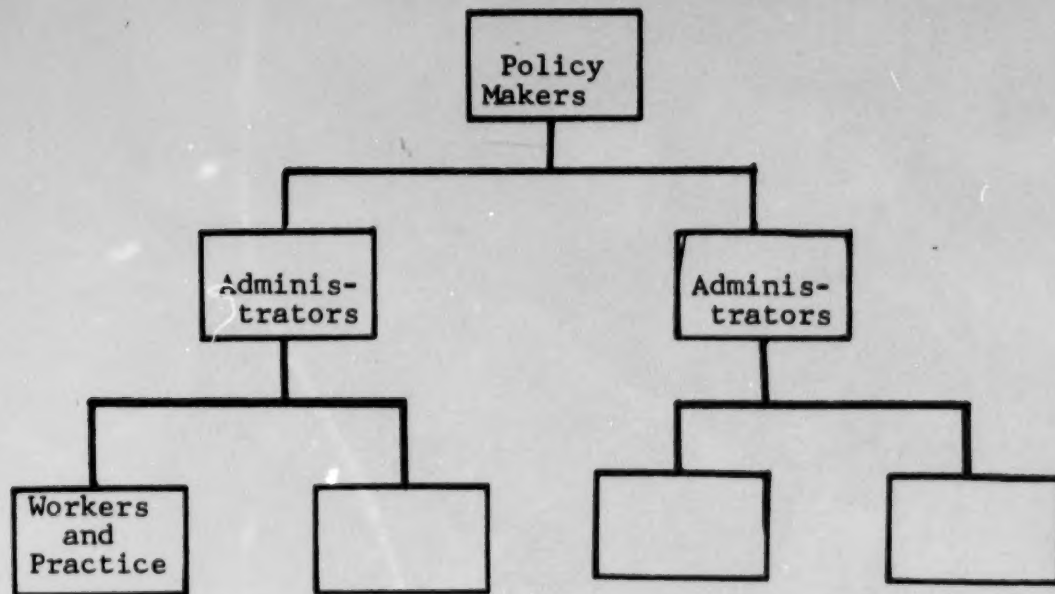
In the original writing of this chapter, it was proposed that two frameworks of philosophy and management might often govern the thinking of vocational educators. They were combined in what was called a structural-sequential view of policy and management. The first notion concerned that remnant of rational absolutism which holds that it is possible to state propositions with the properties of truth and eternal stability; so that once formulated, they could guide reasonable men for all times to come. Related to this is the notion that organizational cohesion is a product of policymakers and top level management. These two frameworks stand side by side in Figure 5-1 and since they will be shortly discredited, they deserve only brief explanation.

Figure 5-1A assumes that the path from philosophy to practice goes through a series of steps which lead one after the other. It starts with a knowledge base which one can call philosophy. The next term encountered is "principles," but it is difficult to distinguish principles from philosophy. It might be claimed that in formulating philosophies, we are developing a general knowledge base, whereas in formulating principles one is selecting that which is relevant and worthy of belief. In any case, it is assumed that there is some process of refining and organizing a knowledge base to support the rest of the process. Once this is accomplished, the framework calls for the formulation of policy. This seems to add a component of practical decision. With policy decision, the broad directions which action is to take are established. There remains only those steps necessary for translating knowledge and policy into practice.

There are some striking similarities between this linear model of rational processes and what might be called the top-down perspective of management. It is typically illustrated in the organizational charts as outlined in Figure 5-1B. In this model, top



(A)



(B)

Figure 5.1 Two Forms of the Structural-sequential Framework of Philosophy and Practice

level management formulates policy and establishes broad directions which the entire organization is to follow. Middle level management translates policy into administrative procedures and regulations. Operational level workers translate procedures into practice. It goes without saying that the workers wouldn't know what to do if they hadn't been told.

Professor Jones criticizes these models severely, pointing out that modern theory had exposed their inadequacies long ago and to present them now is to beat a dead horse. In a similar fashion, no intelligent manager would be guided by them, because they recognize the many variables that must be accounted for in organizational dynamics. But if we review the recent vocational education literature, it is apparent that these paradigms are not completely dead. In suggesting that vocational education adopt a policy toward work, Feldman (1978) finds it necessary to comment:

I believe there's a fatal flaw in the approach to management which, only yesterday, was accepted almost universally. For years it was assumed that management's task was to tell people what to do and to punish them in some way if they failed or refused to do it.

Now we are beginning to realize that this view of the administrative task has been largely discredited. It is a suitable way to manage only a fraction of a human being's capacities. You can command a man to turn a nut on an assembly line, but you cannot command him to be inventive or caring or resourceful. Conventional management based on control, cannot embrace the qualities most modern institutions need most. (p. 50)

Feldman is making a point similar to that made earlier. Policy affects the qualities that will emerge in the institution, but policy can either promote system effectiveness or block it. Since neither students of administrative theory nor practicing administrators follow these models, perhaps Feldman is also beating a dead horse.

But there is one last possibility that deserves attention. Both theorists and practicing administrators would be quick to point out that the organizational chart requires many arrows of feedback and interaction to illustrate the dynamics of modern administration. Modern workers are given participatory roles. If so, then we should find that these top-down views of the administrative process would not be held by workers either. They would know that they are not being treated as pawns but as participants. However, the pattern of union propaganda and labor-management negotiation does not suggest that the top-down view is completely dead. Somehow, workers and unionists still persist in viewing administration as a control system rather than as a participatory

system in which their talents for thinking are making contributions to organizational effectiveness.

But there is no sense in beating a dead horse, so the topic is left with the nagging thought that somewhere those less informed than Professor Jones may be ensnared by the corpse of an idea that should have been buried long ago; and perhaps the gap between policy theory and practice is as great as the gap between educational theory and practice.

A Model That's Alive But Should Be Dead

Professor Jones had some clear ideas of what the policy process does involve. While his model provides a clear cut role for vocational educators interested in shaping policy, there is serious question as to whether they should play that role. It seems that policy theorists have become realistic about how policy is truly formulated. Policy makers are no longer viewed as intellectual gurus or experts to whom decision power is granted because of their expertise or leadership. The possibility of absolute knowledge has been replaced by the spectre of uncertainty and sometimes downright ignorance. Policy makers turn to specialists for guidance and to the will of the people as expressed in the polling places and media.

Indeed, the policy making environment seems to be composed of special interest groups organized to advance their own ideas and goals. The policy maker becomes a power broker and the policy that emerges in law or proclamation represents a negotiated compromise. Thus the role cut out for vocational educators, who do not have policy making power, is that of special interest advocacy competing with other interest groups to convince policy makers that the vocational education position should be adopted into law. Indeed, in this model, it seems that law is policy.

What is disturbing about this model is that while it is descriptive of what is really going on today, the very process contains the seeds of its own destruction. Special interest advocacy is growing into a national disease and following the path of special interests may hasten the demise of vocational education. David Broder (1978) comments that special interest are throttling the system. He quotes Senator Wendell R. Anderson (D. Minn):

The single-interest constituencies. . . have just about destroyed politics as I knew it. They've made it miserable to be in office -- or to run for office -- and left me feeling it's hardly worth the struggle to survive.

Broder noted that he typically ignores such complaints from politicians, but this time there was a serious issue at stake. Broder saw it as the need to maintain a viable two-party system which could maintain a general public policy and support its members against the condemnation of special interest groups.

However, there is an even more important issue here. The power-brokers have themselves become pawns instead of leaders. To a large degree, public loss of confidence in congress and elected officials has arisen because they recognize that political expediency often replaces rational consistency and the national interest. When a teacher's union or an environmentalist group rates political candidates according to the number of times they have voted on their special-interest legislation such as tenure, job rights, improved pensions and so forth, both the politicians and the public at large know the game that is being played. In the process, the interests of the nation are replaced by the interests of the lobby. In the long run, political expediency must fail for both the politician and the country.

Where does this leave vocational education? In the long run, support for vocational education must be based not on being able to influence those with policy making power, but on the support of a society well served.

Perhaps vocational educators should ask: What can be gained by managing to influence policy makers: Pretend that vocational education had complete control and could influence legislators to translate into legislation every position formulated by the profession. With unlimited money, support, and independence to pursue the goals of vocational education, would the result be a system of vocational education which addresses all of the problems posed by Feldman, Persons and others; or would the result be more of what we have now? So again the question arises: Do we need policy as it is defined in traditional paradigms, or do we need principles of system design by which we can define ourselves and what effective vocational education means?

The Functional-Dynamic Framework

To understand the role philosophy, principles, policy and practice play in vocational education, it seems one must turn from models which represent dead horses, and even from some that are alive and kicking. A tentative framework is suggested in Figure 5-2 as a sort of Rube Goldberg attempt to introduce a system perspective. As Swanson (1978) suggested, the model could be called the circle-in-circles model rather than the functional-dynamic framework. The title is trivial, it's implications are not. It offers three points of discussion: (1) the functional roles of philosophy, principles, policy and practice in defining the boundaries of the organization and its capacity for system effectiveness; (2) the relationship of these elements to creating cohesion among the members within the profession; and (3) the contribution these elements may make to opening or closing the relationships

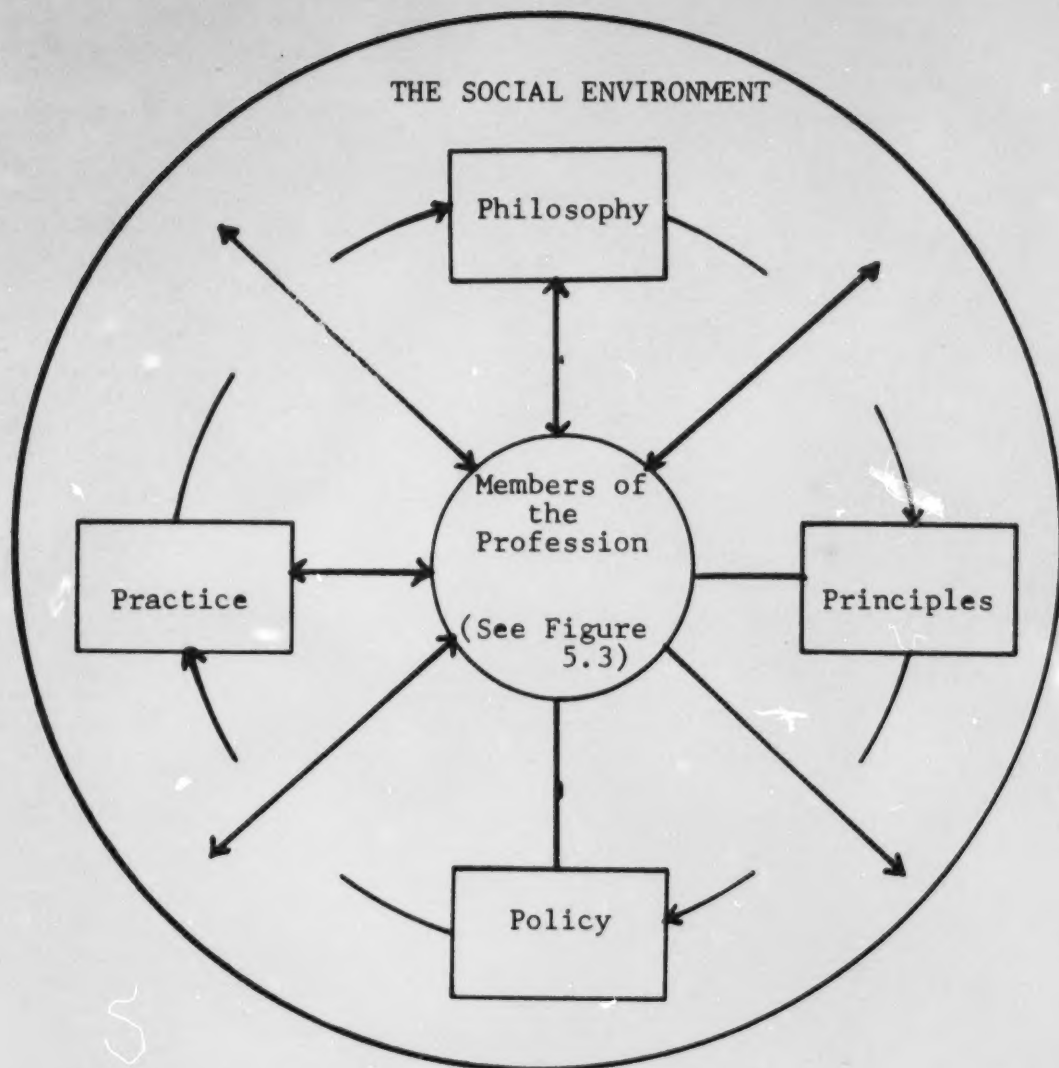


Figure 5.2 Functional-Dynamic Framework for Policy Making

possible between members of the profession and the society which they seek to serve.

The Path from Philosophy to Practice

What is it that distinguishes policy as a dynamic force in the improvement of vocational education, from policy as a mere collection of words? The traditional model assumes that we think and formalize our beliefs in order to act more rationally and find better solutions to problems. There is nothing faulty in this premise. The mistakes lie in our interpretations that this is a one-way process with beginning and end; that the steps proceed automatically; and that the flow of information is the only thing involved.

One can refer back to John Dewey to find that the relationship between knowledge and action is continuous and circular. Knowledge guides action, but it is the consequences of knowledge in action that in turn defines what one is willing to believe. This suggests that there is a criterion of consistency which must be observed in formulating policy. Knowledge, beliefs and proclamations that are not validated in action are unlikely to be believed. Practice that cannot express itself in rational form becomes isolated and incommunicable, private knowledge, but not public philosophy. Let's briefly examine what philosophy and policy can achieve and the conditions necessary for achieving it.

Philosophizing is more than formulating a set of beliefs or propositions. It may aspire to absolute truth, but its functional role is to guide behavior and it is useful only to the extent that it provides a useful guide. In terms of Figure 5-2, one can load the philosophy block with all sorts of ideas, ideals and principles. But they become functionally useful only when they are consistent with practice and all of the other components in the circular flow which lead to it. Indeed, the analysis of Chapter IV, indicates that the current status of vocational education is that we have more ideals and principles than we have capacity for practice. Do we need more philosophy, a better philosophy, or a sounder foundation in practice for the words we already have?

When an imbalance between principles and practice occurs, what alternatives exist? It seems a simple matter to (1) retain the ideals and focus on improving practice; or (2) eliminate some of the ideals until they are consistent with what is possible in practice; or (3) ignore the inconsistency altogether. While the last alternative would not be permitted rational policy makers, Professor Jones suggests that this is what happens all too often.

In any case, it is obvious that practice does not flow automatically from words. There are other elements in the chain which one must consider, such as decision, commitment, responsibility and capability.

W Policy Making. What distinguishes policy from everything else? One can agree with the rationalist model that philosophy and principles form the basis for policy, but only to the degree that the policy maker operates from a knowledge base and respects the various criteria of rational consistency. Even then, the interpretation that policy flows automatically from knowledge, or even constitutes a transformation or restatement of knowledge is open to serious question. This is particularly true when policy makers are viewed as "power brokers" and policy is viewed as a negotiated compromise between special interest groups.

Perhaps the most compelling difference between policy and the knowledge base is the element of decision. Philosophy and science provide causal and conditional propositions such as "If one does X, then the probability of Y occurring can be calculated to be Z."¹ In contrast to this, one notes that policy makers have to make hard decisions. They have to balance priorities, choose between alternatives, take risk and balance costs and benefits. But even decision processes can be interpreted as primarily a cognitive activity; and the ideal of the "rational" decision maker promotes this idea. There is plenty of research which purports to dispose of "rational" decision making, and establish the claim that human decision makers are anything but rational. One should note that decisions can be based on widely diverse knowledge banks: those dealing with educational process; those dealing with "policy" process and even those dealing with the decision process itself. The policy maker who sees himself following the management science picture of the rational decision maker might be perceived differently by the educator who clamors that we must address ourselves to "human values." Are "human values" too obscure a factor to be quantified in a cost-benefit model?

Precisely this factor that distinguishes effective policy from mere words, and that establishes the policy maker as a leader rather than a power broker. It would seem that effective policy would make a commitment to values which are capable of being shared and which promotes practice. The commitment is not to policy, but to effective vocational education; to practice. Perhaps Zimbardo (1969a) is relevant as he comments on the characteristics of personal decision:

Why should choice make trouble? The ability to choose first involves psychological freedom to specify what the alternatives are, or to perceive those that are available. The act of deciding upon one alternative and rejecting others requires consideration of the attributes, implications,

¹ While some readers may wish to distinguish between philosophy and science, it is preferred to regard both as contributors to the knowledge base for vocational education.

utility, and costs of each. The commitment to take action transforms what is originally a continuum of theoretical response alternatives into a concrete dichotomy with one degree of freedom, thereby changing intellectual involvement into immediate ego involvement. (p. 12)

The point is that rational decision makers consider all of the evidence available, but in the final analysis there is a transformation of knowledge into commitment. It adds to policy decision the spark of commitment which alone makes leadership possible.

Professor Jones has claimed that vocational educators don't make policy. From the point of view of policy-making power he was probably correct. But from the point of view of making commitments and providing leadership, perhaps vocational educators are the only ones capable of formulating policy. If policy were only a matter of obtaining consensus on beliefs, vocational educators could rest content that by formulating a position to guide those with policy making power they have done all that could be done. But Persons, Feldman and countless others are constantly reminding us that vocational education can be better than it is. Such improvement does not depend solely on influencing legislators. Quite the contrary, no act of congress or state legislature can instill the sense of values, commitment and responsibility which alone has the power to transform intellectual manipulation of a data base into concrete action. Indeed to focus on such mechanics of policy making merely distracts one from the task at hand.

In related terms, can an act of congress define what vocational education is, or who vocational educators are? Again Zimbardo (1969b) makes a relevant comment:

Volition, commitment and responsibility fuse to form the core of one pole of the basic human choice The act of freely making a commitment for which one assumes responsibility individuates the decision maker. By this readiness to enter into a contractual agreement which has consequences for which he must be liable, man sets himself in opposition to all those who refuse to act individually, and thus separates himself from tribal ties to undifferentiated (safer) group action. (p. 111)

It is safer to define vocational education in terms of schools, standardized programs and job training, but such action does not address the problems which need solution. Nor does it lead the profession to solving them. Zimbardo's comments, however, do not seem to apply to leadership alone. To influence practice, it would seem that the entire profession must make a set of commitments which give fire to understanding. By this criteria, only vocational educators can make policy and define themselves.

Practice and Capability. Perhaps the preceding comments sound logically valid, but totally unrealistic. Knowledge, decision and commitment form necessary but not sufficient conditions for practice. Capability must be added. It is here that the critic points out that those with policy making power also control the pursestrings and authorize vocational education activities. It is shortsighted to deny the very real limitations which the political process imposes on vocational education. But it is equally shortsighted to suppose that no freedom of action exists, or that the profession of vocational education wholly depends on such a process. Professor Jones, while asserting that vocational educators do not have policy-making power, would be quick to assert that the political process is a sound one, it makes room for people with good ideas and the character to carry them out.

Capability does not follow automatically from authorization and funding. It requires all of the factors of production: funds and equipment, yes; but also those components of human functioning such as management and the self-discipline of workers and students to manage themselves.

The need for resources is one of the major reasons why one must turn to agencies with policy making power. But what can policy makers provide? The critical question has already been asked: If vocational education had complete control over legislative bodies and could obtain unlimited resources, to what ends would they be directed? Would the result be an improved educational system capable of addressing needed changes, or merely an expanded version of the existing system serving the limited needs which current knowledge and commitment support?

Perhaps it is equally important to ask: What if legislative support for vocational education is fixed at current levels or even reduced? It appears this question might have to be addressed shortly.

Existing legislation already defines roles for vocational education that it has been incapable of carrying out. We have been authorized beyond our capabilities. It might be argued that the authorization had not been followed by adequate resources. But the point of this discussion is that resources are relative to the capacities needed to accomplish defined ends.

It will be asserted later, that there are certain qualities which effective systems must have which are independent of specific problems posed by environmental change, and which are of paramount importance to effective policy. A tenuous analogy can be drawn between the vocational education system and the effective individual. Is the effective person one who has learned to cope with the problems posed by past experience; or is the effective person one who has the capacity for being sensitive to problems, to access a variety of problem-solving techniques, and has the judgment and flexibility to apply his arsenal to a variety of new situations?

Perhaps we have entered the continuous circle connecting knowledge to action at the wrong point. Perhaps action is philosophy and policy. Perhaps the only aspect of the process that is real is the actions of thinking, problem solving, and doing, with words being only a representation of what we have done and a roadmap to what we intend doing. If this is true, it seems more and more likely that policy must be first involved with our own actions and our capacity for further action, in short, with system effectiveness.

Policy and Effective Social Relationship

The circular path between knowledge and practice is useful for developing a perspective on the role of philosophy and policy in building an effective system. But in system theory, this path of self-definition establishes a set of boundaries which may open vocational education's interaction with society, or shut it off. It marks the relative difference between open and closed systems. In Figure 5-2, this is illustrated by drawing arrows of interaction between society and the profession through the boundaries established by philosophy, policy and practice. It should be emphasized that it is not philosophy or any other component that interacts, it is the membership ranging from top level executives to practicing teachers.

Vocational education does not exist apart from everything else, and the nature of change in society forces this realization upon us. To address the new problems which have emerged, two basic strategies have been adopted. One group calls for reaffirming the basic principles which have structured vocational education for decades, and asks for a reinterpretation of these principles to accomodate change. Another group challenges the principles themselves and claims that vocational education must assume new roles; crumble the walls of the existing structure and move out into society and participate in the process of change itself.

When these strategies are viewed in terms of the circular path, both seem valid. But there are nonetheless, potential differences in the quality of interaction which various interpretations of these approaches permit. If one interprets the emphasis on principles as something to be formulated and hence become rigid, the boundaries of the system become closed and only limited interaction is possible. If one interprets the activist position too broadly, the very identity of vocational education may disappear and relationships with society may become intrusive and objectionable. If vocational education is to serve all people, regardless of their location and circumstance, then should vocational education take over or replace CETA and other training programs under the Department of Labor? If vocational education is to assist in job creation by assisting small businessmen, then do we take over the training functions of the Small Business Administration?

This type of question leads to a form of means-end analysis that can lead to the extremes of rigidity and extremes of intrusion into social roles which are better performed by people other than vocational educators. But it also suggests that we can be carried away with concern over specific problems. It is suggested that by focusing on the basic characteristics and capacities which vocational education needs to develop, a reasonable capacity for interaction will be established which can carry us through regardless of problems which we face now or in the future. The capacity for interaction is not simply defined by the number of problems which one can identify. An analogy to personal functioning is appropriate. The person who does not know who he is, but tries to be everything to everyone is as ineffective as the person who is so narrow he can't escape the prison of his own definition.

It is suggested again that vocational education's capacity for interaction will be found in examining the types of characteristics and capacities which constitute an effective system.

System Capacity and Building Internal Cohesion

What can be meant by such questions as "Do we need a philosophy or a national policy for vocational education?" Do they imply a set of absolute truths from which one can proclaim "This is what we believe?" or "This is what thou shalt believe?" Does it imply a policy translated into federal law which is capable of governing all vocational education? It seems that such questions merely obscure the issues. Vocational education is more than a structure of beliefs, laws or buildings. It is an organization of people, often autonomous, but always the only vehicle through which vocational education can indeed interact with society.

What we are truly after, is cohesion among the members of the profession. Not the fragile cohesion of compromise between self-interest groups; but the cooperation of people committed to problems that need solving. We want beliefs that can be shared, but we also want commitment and responsibility. We want people who are not only eager to work, but people with the needed capacity for practice. We want people who can share beliefs, but also share our ignorance and participate actively in the search for better solutions. A policy that cannot build these characteristics in the membership comes close to being a mere collection of words. But what principles can guide policy in achieving such cohesion?

In Figure 5.2, arrows of interaction have been drawn between the membership of the profession and each of the elements in the path from philosophy to practice. Let's hypothesize that philosophy and policy not only opens or closes system boundaries, but it may also create cohesion or dissension within the organization. In the previous writing of this paper, a comparison was made between a top-down

management philosophy which imposed policy on the organization, and a participative philosophy of management which stressed coordination and cooperative contributions from everyone. As previously noted, Professor Jones objected to this approach because in theory at least, participative management is the only way to go.

But there is a gap between the theory of participative management and its practice. Two opposing reasons are given for this gap. Workers will claim that management won't provide the opportunity for participation; and management will claim that the workers won't get involved even when given the opportunity. Both positions have validity in experience, but neither is critical to what is being attempted here.

If we assume that cooperation and participation is essential to an effective system, then one must ask what conditions are necessary for its attainment? The answers are similar to those found before, but they point out a basic defect in Figure 5.2. That illustration represents the problem in terms of blocks which may be interpreted as entities or structures. Organizational dynamics, indeed activity that is distinctly human, does not involve a mechanical balancing of forces. What should be portrayed is not a closed circle of processes, but a spiral of learning and growth. Achieving consistency between philosophy and practice is really not a matter of starting with so many units of idealistic philosophy and balancing it with units of capability. The gap between ideals and practice is closed only through a process of learning and development; of human commitment and capacity.

If one proposes to determine the characteristics of an effective system, and hence principles of system design, then the capacity for learning must be included. An organization that cannot change and learn is no different than an individual who cannot learn and grow. But Professor Jones has many valid reasons why one cannot simply translate the principles of individual growth into principles of organizational growth. On the other hand, modern system theory suggests there are some similarities in principle, and they are worth examining.

A System Approach to Organizational Growth

Perhaps the reason why Professor Jones cannot see the relationship between individual learning and organizational effectiveness is because he is too much enmeshed in the current frameworks of policy and administrative theory. If we try to pin Professor Jones down to what policy "is" or what effect it has, we would find few precise answers. The only thing that can be empirically verified about policy is that it refers to an attempt of one human being (or several) to communicate to others; and it involves some formalization of beliefs, the construction of a collection of words. Human efforts to communicate are indeed important events. But when these events are called policy making and their impact is explained by models of power brokerage, top-down management, or even participatory management, it seems that we are making claims that are more assumed than demonstrated.

It is only in recent years that the age old problem of the relationship between the individual and his society or environment has become manageable within an integrated framework. The dualism of the nature-nurture problem is being replaced by human interaction within a system which is holistically and hierarchically organized. Readers familiar with the work of system theorists such as von Bertalanffy (1968), Ashby (1956, 1962), Miller (1955) and Laszlo (1972) will recognize in the framework of Figure 5.2 reflection of basic system principles. The three segments of the model: the professional membership; the boundaries of their vocational organization(s); and their interaction with society are explainable as levels of system organization.

Regarding vocational education as the "system" we see that it is part of a suprasystem called society, and it is composed of subsystems (people) working individually or in smaller groups. The question of open or closed boundaries was discussed in terms of interaction between society and vocational education as a whole. The same question applies to interactions between subsystems or people within the organization. The relation between knowledge and action operates within each human being, and it affects how open or closed each person's boundaries will be. The question of building cohesion and an integrated, cooperating organization may be framed in these terms.

In sharp contrast to Professor Jones' separation of individual and organizational functioning, system theorists assert that the principles governing system effectiveness apply to systems of all kinds extending from the smallest organism up to star galaxies which comprise the physical universe. This is an important claim and if true may provide policy makers with the clues needed to insure that policy will not be a mere collection of words but will really have an impact on the effectiveness of vocational education itself.

It should be no surprise that the most fundamental of system concepts concern the system's capacity for growth and learning. A system survives, and is effective, only to the extent that it can function in its environment. According to Laszlo (1972), system theorists assert that any system inherits and/or develops two basic capacities. One is the capacity for self-stabilization, the other for self-organization and reorganization. The concepts are outlined in Figure 5.3 and will be applied to educational systems in the next chapter.

Figure 5.3 should be read as follows. In varying degrees, every system (in this case assume a living system), has some means of exchanging information, energy and materials with its environment. Although it oversimplifies matters, we can say that incoming information is first processed through stabilizing mechanisms of adaptation which tend to operate on a negative-feedback or error-reducing principle. Interpreted biologically such mechanisms have been called homeostasis and homeorhesis. Incoming information is processed by comparison to

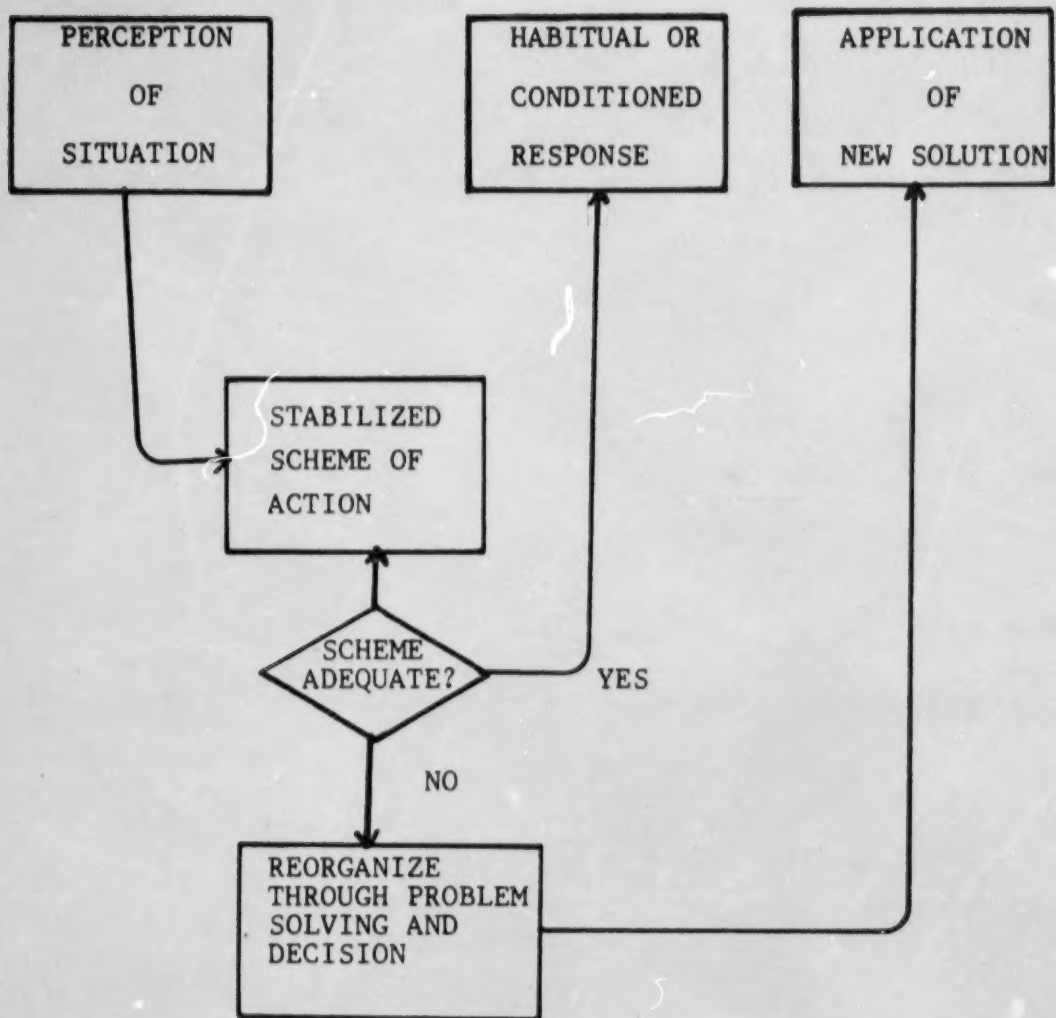


Figure 5.3 Basic Mechanisms of Systems Functioning

a stabilized structure which interpreted cybernetically is a control system, and cognitively as a psychological structure or "scheme."

As long as the scheme is adequate for dealing with the situation, the homeostatic, stabilizing or negative feedback mechanisms will continue to operate. But as Piaget and others have shown, if the stabilized scheme of action is inadequate to deal with the situation, another type of imbalance occurs. The organism recognizes that its stabilizing modes of adaptation are inadequate and processes of reorganization are invoked. In human organisms, reorganization process involve activities such as problem-solving, rational decision and revaluing. The essential point is that the organism reorganizes and changes itself, and in the process, older, stabilized schemes of action may be discarded, continue to operate in the limited situations for which they are adequate, or become reorganized to serve a broader scheme of action.

A full explanation of both types of process is usually given in terms of cybernetic theory. In living organisms the stabilizing modes of adaptation have been studied under such headings as homeostasis and homeorhesis. In cognitive psychology, Piaget has combined both modes under a single process of equilibration in which processes of stabilization may be roughly translated into assimilation mechanisms and processes of reorganization into accommodation mechanisms.

Two Theories of Learning and Management

These abstract concepts appear to have carried us further from policy than ever before, but if policy must be based on system effectiveness, a theory of learning is indispensable. Remember that Figure 5.3 is to be positioned at the very center of the system framework drawn in Figure 5.2. Let's examine how this picture of learning impacts both educational and management theory.

It is important to realize that both our theories of management and our theories of education have been heavily influenced by behaviorist psychology. Behaviorism was based on some faulty research premises which have been discredited in recent years. It had been held that all human behavior can ultimately be reduced to stimulus-response patterns; that these patterns become fixed by reinforcements such as rewards and punishments; and that they become "generalized" and applied to an increasing variety of situations.

Educators have known all along that human beings were not simply stimulus-response models. People do have the capacity for problem solving, creative thinking and even intuitive insight. Our real problem is why they don't use these capacities more often. Behaviorists either rejected these notions or attempted to reduce them to stimulus-response patterns. But research in ethnology, neurology and cognitive

development have combined to invalidate the behaviorist framework. There is a hierarchical course of development and learning. Growth is based on, and made possible by earlier developments, but the new capacities which emerge are new and are not reducible to more elementary patterns.

What emerges is the realization that what has been presumptuously called the "theory of learning" only speaks to one set of processes. If one really wants to account for human growth, one must deal explicitly with two theories of learning, one treating stabilization processes and one treating reorganization processes. Of course, both theories are encompassed in modern research such as exemplified by Piaget.

What also needs to be recognized is that our theories of management within which policy is traditionally understood must also learn to grapple with these two types of human processes. As Feldman noted, "Conventional management, based on control, cannot embrace the qualities most modern institutions need" (1978, p. 50).

A stimulus-response theory of behavior might support a theory of policy in which power and directives shape organizational behavior. Then power to administer punishments and rewards might indeed force compliance with stabilized schemes, but it cannot lead to the creativity and commitment which vocational education needs.

Organizational effectiveness in this and the next century will demand more than stabilizing routines. It will require flexibility and responsiveness to a world of rapid change. Therefore, if policy is to lead to organizational effectiveness, it must lead to these capacities for participation by as many members of the profession as possible in problem solving and other reorganizing processes.

It is only recently that sufficient theoretical and experimental support has been accumulated to validate the two types of learning associated with stabilizing and reorganizing capabilities. The application of stabilized schemes tend toward lateral or horizontal growth in that an established scheme is applied to an increasing variety of situations. The behaviorist paradigm does not explain such lateral growth, but if it has any applicability at all, it is to a psychology of stabilization. But human beings and other systems also have the capacity for vertical growth, toward hierarchical complexity and flexibility; toward what Maslow (1954) called "growth needs." This type of growth depends on processes of reorganization such as problem-solving, valuing and creative decision. Its essential characteristic is that it changes the system itself; not necessarily by radically changing structure, but by reorganizing it into more flexible patterns and more complex purposes.

Remember that Professor Jones has argued that models of individual learning cannot be extended to organizations. If not individual learning, he does not articulate in what kind of learning organizations do engage. But his point is well taken. Organisms are born with some basic capacities. Social organizations are not. The capacities for learning and growth have to be created by a conscious effort of system design, or left to the capacity of individuals for cooperative action within their area of the organization. Failure to construct the capacities for growth and learning in organizations may leave them insensitive, and rigidly trapped by their stabilized schemes of action.

CHAPTER VI

POLICY IN A FRAMEWORK OF SYSTEM DESIGN

Just as words are not automatically translated into practice, considering the theory of policy won't automatically make it effective. The discussion of policy in a system framework is valuable for creating a new perspective, but is also runs the risk of getting lost in a mythology of policy that must find practical application. In this chapter, an attempt will be made to analyze some concrete policy statements that have been proposed for vocational education; search for some central concepts which deserve consideration in vocational education policy; and then, show how concepts of system theory can have a practical application for improving policy and the practice of vocational education.

If there is a gap between our principles and practice, it is primarily because vocational education does not have the capability to practice what it teaches. Neither does education as a whole. On the other hand, that capability can be developed if the system can be viewed in terms of the central capabilities needed; and if an effort is made to use the technologies that have become available in the last few decades.

Analysis of Vocational Education Policy

The University of California publication on vocational education policy started with a listing of principles and then applied them to four areas: program policies, personnel policies, fiscal policies, and evaluation policies. Note that the net effect is to establish design parameters for the system, i.e., when one writes specific policy one is engaging in system design.

Program Policies

Noting that "The total vocational education program consists of the courses, sequence of courses or groups of course that comprise the total offerings in vocational education" (p. 7) the University of California publication lists fifteen program policies. A few represent issues for immediate discussion.

Vocational education programs shall provide for a realistic balance between the vocational interests of individuals and the needs of business, industry and society.

Vocational education shall be provided to the extent that all individuals leaving or graduating from educational institutions will have had the opportunity to obtain a saleable skill.

Vocational education programs shall include instruction in reading, oral and written expression, computation, and social interaction as they are required by the occupations.

Vocational education programs shall provide occupational information and guidance.

Vocational education programs shall be designed to serve all individuals of secondary school age or older, including those who have academic, socio-economic, cultural, physical or other handicaps, and who need and can profit from the instruction.

Vocational education shall be provided that allows individuals the opportunity to enter, progress, and exist as their specific needs dictate. (pp. 7-8)

These particular policies refer to individual differences in students which programs should accommodate. Other program policies attempt to relate the programs to the occupational structure and the shifting patterns of supply and demand in the labor market.

Reading the policy statements of vocational education, it seems that vocational educators would like to believe that they respond to the needs of students on the one hand, and to the needs of the occupational structure and society on the other. In reality, however, vocational education is based on the structure of schooling which itself is too rigid to respond to much of anything. There is an indisputable wisdom in the words of the Regents of the State of New York (1971) who claimed:

An occupational system capable of serving all students will need to be broadly conceived as part of a redesigned total educational system which has as one of its major purposes, preparation for earning a living. (p. 6)

The policy statements of vocational education are not inconsistent with the position of the Regents; they just ignore them. The very use of the word "program" implies something in vocational education which requires explicit statement. Vocational education seems to design the majority of its programs around the constraints of school structures, autonomous classrooms and standardized curriculum which fits into scheduled school years. The result is a set of standardized packages

that are too inflexible to adapt to either differences in students or changes in the occupational structure or labor market. The program policies of vocational education are comparable to marketing policy. It is apparent that the way vocational education is conceiving its services and packaging them are increasingly unacceptable to a large number of customers we seek to serve.

It seems that the only type of response which vocational education, and education as a whole, is prepared to make, is to meet each newly discovered problem or need with a standardized program; well-suited to the structure of schools, but ill-suited to many of the problems to be addressed.

If one wants to provide equal opportunity to students scattered in rural areas, one must establish a regional school that offers a range of vocational programs comparable to those found in large urban settings. If one wants to serve handicapped and culturally disadvantaged groups who cannot keep up in classrooms with students who do not have these disadvantages, the response must be a separate "program" for the disadvantages. Indeed, for every new group of people to be served, whether distinguished by a newly identified handicap or by geographic location, the solution must be a standardized program packaged in semester or year-long courses of instruction, and supported by a teacher who is competent in the subject matter to be covered.

As long as this pattern is followed, vocational education will never serve the people it intends to serve. There will never be enough money to support separate programs for rural districts, for disadvantaged groups, for adults who need retraining, or for most of the people who would want or need to obtain vocational training.

Consider this problem from the perspective of rural education. A rural student wishes to study electronics, but there is insufficient enrollment to justify a standardized program. Even if the enrollment existed, by the time the necessary authorization was received, facilities prepared and a teacher hired, the potential enrollees will have turned to other programs and graduated. There are alternatives to this approach and they will be discussed shortly.

Personnel Policies

It is apparent that our program policies are intimately connected with our personnel policies. Not only are programs constructed around the structure of schools, but vocational education has committed its fate to the concept of teacher-controlled instruction and the role of the teacher as a transmitter of information or occupational expert. In some situations, these concepts may provide an adequate response capability, but there are an increasing number in which they fall.

In the University of California publication on policy making, the general principle was stated:

Vocational education requires a competent staff with expertise in the fields for which they are responsible. (p. 4)

The personnel policy statements read:

All instructional, supervisory, administrative, and teacher education personnel in vocational education at the state and local levels shall meet minimum professional standards which are set and periodically reviewed and updated by an appropriate state agency.

All Vocational education personnel (instructional, supervisory, administrative and teacher training) shall:

- a. be competent vocational teachers;
- b. be occupational proficient in their field of instruction or supervision, and
- c. Possess actual work experience beyond the learning period in their field of instruction or supervision.

The development of instructional competencies and the maintenance and improvement of occupational skills shall be the shared responsibility of the individual, the local educational agency, the state and the teacher training institution.

In practice, most teachers recognize that they cannot be experts in all phases of their occupational area. Good teachers are the first to admit it, and draw upon "resource" people. More important is the notion that to develop the flexibility needed for meeting diverse student needs, teachers are being encouraged to assume the role of "managers of instruction," rather than of "transmitters of information." What are the implications of this for policy?

Evaluation Policies

Perhaps the most critical aspect of the system is the capacity for what can be called either needs assessment or evaluation. For over fifty years, educational theorists have claimed that everything that happens in education must begin with an assessment of student needs in the context of their society. Only when needs have been

determined, with all of their diversity and uniqueness, is it possible to validly diverse that set of learning experiences and resources which enable learning to take place. In practice of course, needs assessment is more myth than reality. Neither vocational education, nor education as a whole, has ever devised a formal, comprehensive system for assessing individual needs.

Worse still, we don't even know what a need is. Is it a demand imposed by society which must be accommodated by every individual? Is it a deficiency, like hunger, which must be satisfied to preserve health? Is it a tendency in behavior, which having been observed in "normal" people, is assumed to be a requirement or pattern for all? Is it an innate characteristic of human functioning which must be fulfilled if growth is to occur? Is discipline a need? Is freedom a need?

Some of the evaluation policy statements in the University of California publication read as follows:

The assessment of needs and the establishment of quantifiable goals and objectives describing desired outcomes shall be used as the basis for state vocational education planning.

Vocational education programs shall be evaluated on the basis of such criteria as the degree to which stated objectives are met, the processes that are used to meet the objectives, the costs of the programs, and the degree of community acceptance of the programs.

Evaluation of state inservice education programs shall be provided for and conducted by the appropriate state agency, and the reports of such evaluation studies shall serve as a basis for the planning and revision of such programs.

The vocational evaluation process shall involve, but not be limited to, administrators, teachers, students, counselors and other support staff.
(pp. 15-16)

Vocational education is unique among other educational systems in that its major focus for needs assessment has been on the occupational structure and labor market. Theoretically of course, vocational education strives for a balance between the needs of the individual and the needs of society. In practice, the closest vocational education comes to needs assessment is to forecast employment openings in order to establish and justify standardized program offerings, and to do a task analysis of specific occupations in order to establish a curriculum.

Perhaps the ideal needs assessment system for vocational education would be one in which student growth and development and society's occupational requirements are interrelated into one system. Vocational education stands as an intermediary between the student and his working relationship to society. This role is not captured by specifying the job skills required by an occupational structure, although it is necessary. It is not captured by tracking student growth and development, but that is equally necessary.

Total growth and development deserves some comment. It is listed among the principles of vocational education and when used as the reference point measures the greatest gap between philosophy and practice. It is not being proposed that vocational education become responsible for the total growth and development of people. There are limitations to both system capacity and the social role this would imply. It is proposed that growth and development is the only perspective from which assessment can proceed, because that is what the student brings with him wherever he goes.

On the other hand, the vocational development of the individual seems inescapable for vocational educators. This involves more than skill training as the literature on career education demonstrates. As the input-output analysis in Chapter IV suggests, vocational educators can no longer assume that students enrolling in vocational education have the academic, social or vocational maturity which would be necessary for the narrow job skill training paradigm. Indeed, the assumption that students who enter a vocational program intend to take employment in the field for which they are being trained, is an assumption that is increasingly suspect. Particularly among secondary school students, and especially those in academic high schools enrolling in business courses, vocational subjects are pursued for many reasons other than job preparation. These and other factors suggest that the job skill role of vocational education is too narrow to account for the changes occurring in students and in society.

Fiscal Policies

Most of the fiscal policies listed in the University of California publication deal with the role of federal, state and local agencies in funding vocational education, and concern over the problem of equity for poorer districts. There are only two points that need to be made for purposes of this analysis. First, only one policy statement deals with effective cost controls:

Accounting systems shall be developed and used that are designed to clearly identify receipts, disbursements, and balances of the several funds used to finance vocational education. (p. 14)

A glaring deficiency in educational systems as a whole is that there is no effective system of cost accounting. Planners do not have the kinds of financial data that would support evaluation of alternative strategies for delivering vocational education.

The second point illustrates the first. Of all the changes that have occurred in our society, the progress in technology has been one of the most significant. Yet, education remains notoriously labor intensive. Willett, Swanson and Nelson (in press) have analyzed various alternative strategies for mixing technological and human resources in educational delivery systems and report that in some ideal cases, the cost of education could be reduced by up to fifty percent. In no case was there a failure to achieve a reduction in costs. The strategies were developed to deliver educational services of a quality equal to those now being delivered. However, the authors were confident that the basic capabilities provided by computer-assisted management of instruction could lead to improvements in the quality of instruction and the flexibility needed to individualize.

One can argue that technology has nothing to do with policy. But from both a theoretical and practical point of view, such an argument is without foundation. Theoretically, one would be asserting that policy has nothing to do with the capacities needed by an organization to be effective. From a practical point of view, suppose that one were establishing a corporation to meet the transportation needs of the twentieth century. Wouldn't the decision to raise horses and build carriages be a matter concerning policy makers? Wouldn't a manufacturer of furniture be making a policy decision if he directed laborers to use nothing but hammers and chisels? In education, if one rejects technology and the capabilities needed by teachers and managers, one is in effect riding a horse and buggy in the twentieth century.

Central Concepts for Effective Educational Systems

It should be clear from the discussion of specific policies, that each policy specifies a parameter upon which the system will be designed. The basic premise of Chapters IV and V was that to be effective, policy must result in a better educational system. If it doesn't then policy itself is irrelevant. Beginning with a broad framework (Figure 5.2) of a changing society and its problems, the discussion led to basic principles of system effectiveness, i.e., learning and growth as specified by stabilizing and reorganizing mechanisms. These processes formed the core, the very foundation of system functioning. While both are necessary and interactive, stabilizing processes always refer to past problems, past solutions and past schemes. A world of change requires the capacity for reorganization. Such capacities in organization must be consciously built-in by a process of system design, and any policy which pretends to improve system effectiveness must account for them.

It will be argued in this chapter that there are some basic principles which educational theorists have advocated for some time, which have application to the tasks which vocational educators and policy makers face today. They stand in a type of means-end relationship. The first concept is human growth and development and that can be called the overriding value or end. The second concept can be called the essential functions of the educative process, and they can represent the means. The essential functions may be summarized as those of needs assessment, development of flexible response capability, and the capacity for intelligent application. Together, they make up what has been called the process of individualization or personalized education.

These capacities are diagrammed in Figure 6.1. If they are viewed in the traditional perspective, they refer to the capacities a teacher needs to plan instruction and even individualize it. But there are two other perspectives in which they can be interpreted. One is the relationship of these functions to system effectiveness as a whole. The other is their relationship to learning as reorganizing processes. The difficulty in relating these concepts to system effectiveness and policy is that they have been regarded as educational operations, matters of instruction rather than matters of administration and policy. It is suggested that we retrieve these concepts from the limbo of instructional method and reexamine them as central capabilities which describe not only the effectiveness of teachers, but provide standards which affect almost every aspect of system design and policy.

It might be helpful in understanding the intent of this section to recall, how in Chapter V, the argument progressed from the broad framework of society and social problems down to the fundamental factors which determine vocational education's ability to respond to them. In this section, the process is being reversed. It will start with the fundamental capacity for flexibility and learning as reorganization, and using the terminology of education, demonstrate that elaboration of these functions could lead to increased effectiveness of the system for interacting with society and dealing with the problems facing us.

To construct this argument, let's note first the similarity between these basic educational functions and the processes which describe the human capacity for reorganization. Since reorganization involves problem solving and developing new solutions or methods of adaptation, we can compare the traditional language of problem solving with the language used to describe what teachers do in providing quality instruction. Needs assessment need not refer to "needs"; it can refer to the basic processes by which one becomes sensitive to what is going on around him and learns to define problems. The ability to develop flexible patterns of response need not refer to a variety of lesson plans and teaching methods, it can refer to the basic capacity to develop alternative solutions and new methods of interrelating. Finally, the process of intelligent application, or

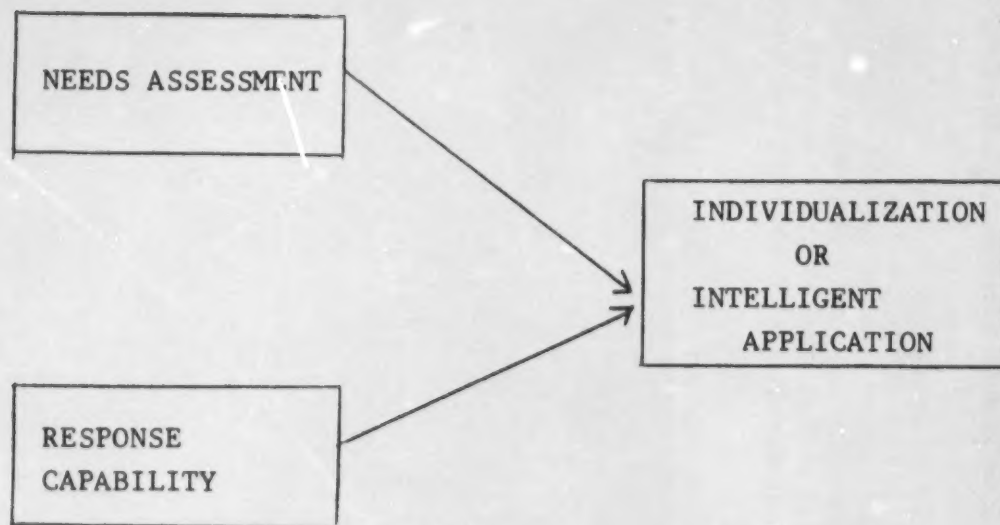


Figure 6.1 Essential Functions of Education Processes

individualization, need not refer to the teacher-student interaction; it can refer to the capacity of any system to intelligently make decisions and commitments in a variety of situations.

In short, it seems that either by insight or by accident, the theorists who have described the essential functions in instructional design, are referring to that aspect of learning and growth which system theorists describe as the capacity for reorganization.

The necessity for these capacities for any system operating in a world of change is confirmed simply by asking whether any system could function without them. Whether the system is a dog, cat, human being or social organization, if sensitivity to environmental change is lacking; if there is no capacity for developing alternatives; and if there is not intelligence and flexibility in application; the system is more dead than alive, or shortly will be. But abstract argument is seldom convincing. To properly move to a system perspective, it seems that we have to stop associating these capacities with instructional methods such as individualization and perhaps stop associating instruction with teachers who operate in autonomous classrooms.

Perhaps that sounds strange, but it is precisely that kind of change in perspective which our changing world seems to demand. It has long been recognized that teachers have played the role of transmitters of information rather than the role of managers of instruction. That role has been necessary because alternative modes of transmission were not available. But if there is any change that is critical to policy, it is the advent of technology which threatens to change not only the role of the teacher, but the role of the entire educational system.

If policy is to be more than a collection of words, it must result in a vocational education system that has the capacity to cope with a world of change. Those capacities are the same at the level of the student, teacher, and manager. They involve the capacity for flexible reorganization and depend on: sensitivity to problems (needs assessment); a range of alternative responses (development of instructional resources); and the capacity for flexible application (individualization rather than standardized instruction).

The principle listed in the University of California publication reads: "Vocational education requires a competent staff with expertise in the fields for which they are responsible." Why shouldn't this eternal truth read: "Vocational education requires a competent staff with expertise in instructional management and the technological tools which make it possible."

A Framework for an Educational System

By introducing terms like technology, needs assessment, and so on, one runs the risk of collecting a random assortment of propositions such as Law claims characterizes our present set of principles and policies. It makes sense to establish a framework for organizing them as soon as possible. Educational technology is an important part of that framework, but its current terminology does not address what is intended. So let's spend a moment dealing with that aspect of the problem.

Some of the most popular technological systems go under the names of computer-managed instruction (CMI), computer-assisted instruction (CAI), and management information systems (MIS). The concepts behind CMI systems are similar to what will be discussed as the critical tasks of educational systems: needs assessment, etc. But the possible interpretation of CMI is that the machine will do it all. It seems more appropriate to focus on the educational system itself and leave open what the machine will accomplish and what will be left to human beings.

To build this perspective, major components of the educational systems have been diagramed in Figure 6.2, and new terminology has been used. The essential tasks of needs assessment, response capability and individualized application can be combined and labeled the instructional management system.

Instruction management must be complemented by instructional delivery. Let's combine all in-school resources, community resources, and the many technological devices for instruction such as CAI, instructional or cable TV and others, and call them an instructional media system. All such media would be listed and managed through the instructional management system.

The critical system for management purposes has been called the management information system. It includes information on logistics as well as the operation of an organization. The design and function of a management information system is influenced by the management philosophy behind it. Here the MIS is called the organizational coordinating system to distinguish between its support of a top-down management philosophy and its support of a participative management philosophy. When a top-down view of management is used, the MIS serves as a monitoring device, extracts information about current operations and supports managers in planning and control. New theories of management stress the need for the active participation of all levels in the organization and the role of management information systems becomes the interactive coordination of activities at all levels. Whether an MIS is viewed as a management control system or as an organizational coordinating system, it will be seen that what is described as the instructional management system becomes the focal point of concern.

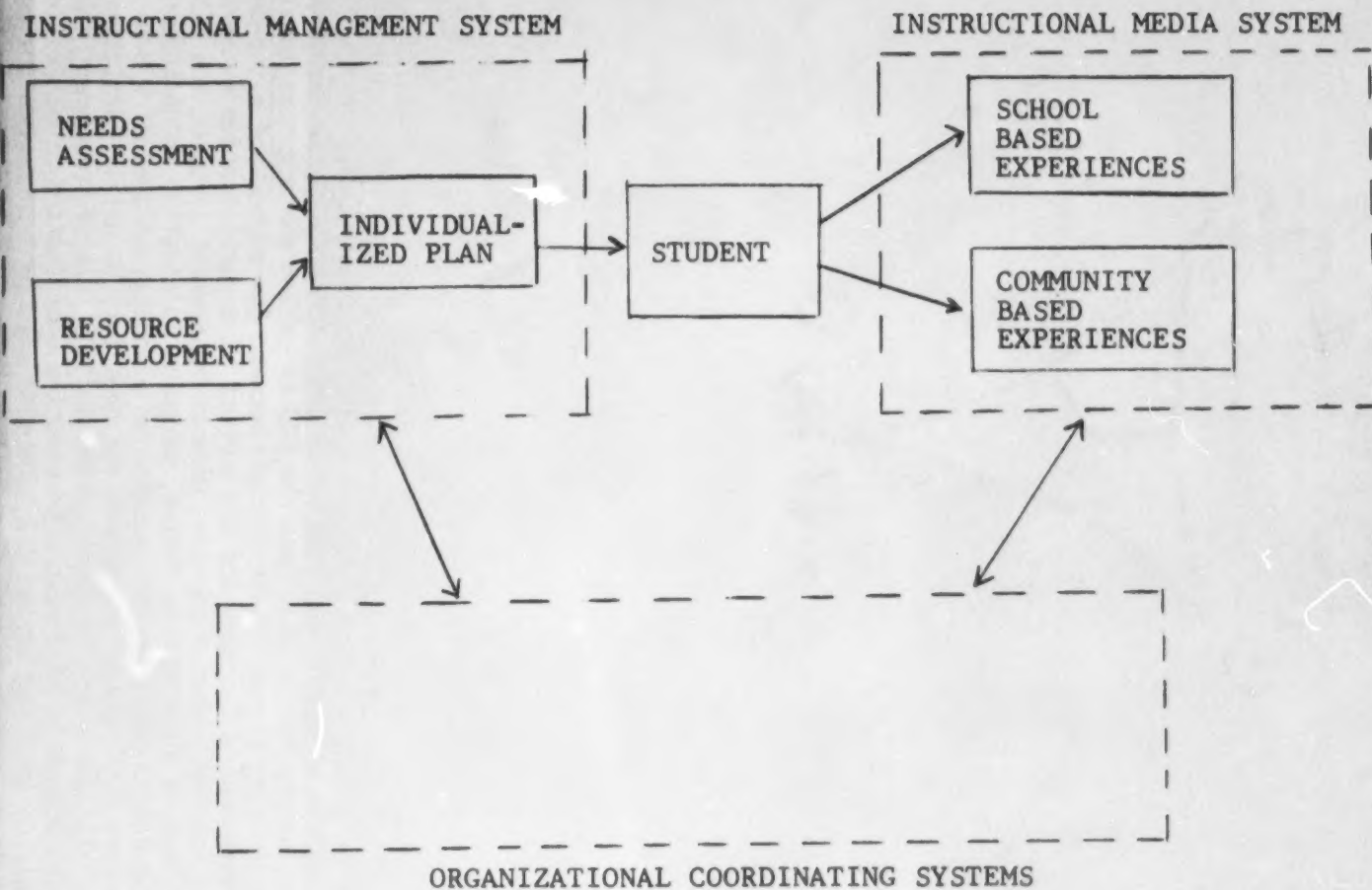


Figure 6.2 Outline of Educational System Components

It should be noted, that a separation has been made between the instructional management functions of the teacher and the instructional media functions. The same distinction should apply to the system as a whole. Insofar as they reflect the system's basic capacity for learning and flexibility, they will apply to management systems as well.

Description of An Instructional Management System

The instructional management system to be described was outlined in Nelson (1978) and Willett, Swanson and Nelson (in press). In those publications, the central design problem was tracking and managing student growth and development as an indispensable function in instructional management. It was assumed that human growth and development was a unifying concept for all educational systems, and that the central problem was to design a needs assessment system that could tract cognitive, affective and psychomotor growth.

The system as it appeared then consisted of a "Student Needs Assessment and Progress Accounting System," an "Instructional Resource Management System," and an "Individualized Planning System." Each component represented an attempt to conceptualize the type of computerized information system that would be needed to support each of the essential functions of instructional management.

The Needs Assessment System was intended to provide the instructional manager with a continuous and interactive record of student status and progress. It would use instructional objectives as specific foci, but these in turn would be organized around broader concepts such as developmental tasks and developmental stages. It would be updated continuously at the end of each defined learning experience through regularly used instructional evaluation procedures and result in an updated growth profile. The system may be modified by using other organizing techniques such as competencies in a job-skill profile.

The Instructional Resource Management System provides a vehicle for organizing and sharing all of the lesson plans, curriculum components, instructional media and the entire capability for instruction that exists in the educational network. The developmental task and/or instructional objective identified in the needs assessment system would be used as the focal point for organizing instructional materials. Together, the two combine into the familiar concept of a "lesson plan." But one should not assume that the problem is equivalent to the teacher's design of a single lesson plan to cover a class period, a week or even a year of instruction. The intent is to provide the capability for flexible response to different needs and learning styles. It is assumed that as the teacher recognized increased diversity in students, attempts will be made to respond to differences; but only if the capability exists. By gathering a variety of instructional resources into a resource management system, flexible response capability is provided to each teacher.

It is worth noting that enormous sums are spent yearly in an attempt to provide teachers with ideas that will improve instruction. Yet most of these materials are never seen by the majority of teachers. Publication and distribution costs are too high, and if the teacher could obtain everything that has been published, he would be simply inundated. The problem that is really crucial to improve instruction is not simply obtaining information, it is the capability to manage information. This capability must be provided if teachers are to shift their roles from transmitters of information to that of managers of instruction.

Anyone who proposes such a thing as an instructional management system being available to teachers must have faith that given the capacity to manage and learn, teachers will actively search for new solutions. Initially, the instructional system could be limited to better management of the existing classroom structure. But it could be expanded to provide cooperation between classrooms in a multidisciplinary approach. A teacher who is not confident of one's own ability to provide an aspect of instruction, could turn to another teacher for assistance, or simply arrange for a student to attend a session in another teacher's class. The instructional resource management system would be organized according to student needs and instructional objectives, not according to autonomous classrooms. Eventually, however, it is likely that a complete restructuring of education into an open system will be necessary to fully utilize the new capabilities.

The next step of expansion would be to include all of the community resources available: guest speakers; employers in cooperative work experience; even Boy Scout merit badge counselors who are willing to work with young people. In short, the instructional management resource system would provide the capability to transform education from a function conducted within the school walls to a societal function using an entire community network of educational resources.

The Individualized Planning System was originally conceived as the final output of the instructional management capability. While the improvement of instruction is a direct concern of policy makers, it is not the message intended in this chapter. The central problem of policy, according to the system view, is to increase the flexibility and response capability of the system as whole. What needs to be demonstrated is that the concept of instructional management simultaneously addresses the capacity of teachers to respond to students, and the capacity needed by management to respond to diverse problems in the environment; and that both are central to effective policy making.

The Application of Instructional Management to Policy Issues

By focusing on what has been called principles of system design, an attempt was made to demonstrate the theoretical consistency between policy, the essential functions of education and the policy

decision to use modern technology to build the capacities needed. This emphasis on building capacity needs to be discussed in reference to Chapter IV and the world of change in which vocational education policy will be ultimately tested. Was Henry David's point valid, that we need to understand the significance of policy processes themselves as well as catalog the problems of the world? Or in terms of Chapter IV's conclusions, do we need to focus on changing ourselves before we can change the world? To engage in a process of system redesign?

Let's examine some of the basic capacities that would emerge if a policy decision was made to design the educational system around instructional management capabilities.

Increased Program Capabilities

Let's return to the problem of meeting the diverse needs of students who can't read or write, students lacking the vocational maturity to choose a career, students in rural areas, and all of the other people vocational education claims it must serve.

Recall the rural student who wants to study electronics. But the regional vocational school does not have such a program, and there is insufficient enrollment potential to justify one. Even if enrollment existed, by the time the necessary authorization was received, classroom facilities prepared, and a teacher hired, the potential enrollees will have turned to other programs and graduated.

On the other hand, if teachers are prepared to act as managers of instruction and the system has the flexible response capability offered by an instructional management system, the student could study independently using computer-assisted instruction, self-teaching texts, or even correspondence courses. There are limitations to this process of course. Laboratory experience and some expert guidance is needed to adequately prepare the student and help him over the rough spots. On the other hand, it is entirely possible that the community has a TV repairman or someone else versed in electronics who could provide the necessary assistance. Whatever limitations such a strategy may have, they are far less than the limitations of the standardized program response which could not respond to the student at all.

When individual differences in vocational interests, prerequisite background, and rates of learning are considered, it is apparent that instructional management capability for individualized instruction would increase the program capacity of vocational education at minimum cost. As a general principle, the law of combinations and permutations suggest that as one breaks down standardized programs into smaller and smaller modules, they can be recombined into a geometrically increasing number of combinations. In short, the "program" capacity of vocational education expands simply because the system has become more flexible in its ability to respond.

Persnnel Policies

Obviously, when one individualizes, the teacher changes roles from a transmitter of information to that of instructional manager. But the significance of this to total system effectiveness is not always apparent. Vocational education must not only respond to people, it must reach them. Teachers confined to the classroom and the school walls cannot do this. The concept of being an instructional manager recalls the notion that vocational education stands as an intermediary between people and their relationship to the world of work. That means all people, and particularly the dropouts, the unemployed, the disadvantages who have given up hope.

The question is not whether existing vocational programs can supplant CETA and other agencies. The question is whether anyone in our society can take responsibility for the vocational development of people. Let's speculate for a moment on the professional role of educators. Suppose that teachers were no longer considered people who teach, but people who were concerned with the growth and development of people and providing the learning experiences necessary to promote growth. Suppose that schools were no longer considered places that people had to go to in order to learn, but places that could assist people in learning. That is, if a person wanted to learn a trade, the school wouldn't necessarily enroll him in a course, it might arrange an apprenticeship or on-the-job training in a business. In short, the school becomes a central agency for coordinating the educational opportunities within a community.

The "student needs assessment system" need not be confined to tracking the progress of people in schools. We could have our "out-patients" and indeed, one current policy suggests that we should.

Vocational education programs shall be provided that allow individuals the opportunity to enter, progress, and exit as their specific needs dictate.
(univ. of Calif., 1975, p. 8)

That policy has been adopted by a number of states, and it is consistent with the idea that education must become a life-long enterprise.

Some educators will no doubt object to this change in the role of the school. But people like Persons and others would point out that interaction with the community might have hidden benefits. The walls of the school work both ways. The dropouts, disadvantaged and unemployed have a need for education and the current structure of schools is keeping them out. One can refer to the continuing education function as an answer to this problem. But few would say that it is adequate. Agencies outside of the school are taking the job which schools seem unwilling to address. There are CETA programs, WIN programs and dozens of others for people who can't or won't come to schools.

It would seem that teachers and the system as a whole would benefit from examining the role of instructional management. At a time when added expenditures for education are being resisted, teachers laid off, and enrollments declining, few have noticed that the general societal need for education has grown greater than ever before. But it is a need that cannot be addressed from behind school walls. The walls of the school have become symbolic of the capacity of education to interact with society. They are both passage and obstacle, but they are built from narrow definitions of education rather than of brick and mortar.

Building Cohesion

Having policies that can't be translated into practice is bad enough under any circumstances. When they are imposed by top-down directive they become divisive. If the capacity for instructional management is interpreted simply as leading to individualization of instruction, one can be skeptical of its consequences. Even first-year teachers have been exposed to diagrams similar to Figure 6.1 which describes instructional management capabilities. Everyone knows about the necessity of "needs assessment" and individualizing instruction. But if the first-year teacher gets too enthusiastic about individualization, there is always a second or third-year teacher available who can say: "Relax, it sounds fine, but it won't work." The reason it won't work is that the basic capacity has not been built into the system. We have a case of benefits and principles being promulgated in policy but being inconsistent with local conditions.

One need not refer to abstract principles to illustrate the inadequacy of this approach. There is a current and concrete example. In the passage of PL 94-142 the Education for Handicapped Children Act, Congress adopted the long standing principle of individualization and mandated the creation of an individualized education plan (IEP) for each handicapped child. In March 1978, Patricia Gorman wrote an article for the American Teacher (the official publication of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL/CIO). She outlined the series of difficulties which teachers and administrators were having in implementing the IEP requirement. Her analysis of difficulties was essentially accurate.

A short time later, the union took a formal position that education should be relieved of the "burdensome" requirement of the IEP. Shanker (September 1978) in outlining the critical issues of education in the union agenda, comments regarding education for the handicapped:

The AFT has continued to press for expanded funding under this law, for a loosening of unreasonable expectations associated with individualized education plans, and for better representation rights for teachers under the process provisions of the law. (p. A-10)

Have policy makers grasped the significance of this phenomena for their own process of policy making? Do we see individualization as something we want teachers to do, or do we see individualization as the basic capacity the system needs for flexible response? The reaction of practicing teachers and the unions was predictable in the framework of policy being advocated in Chapter V. It was not predictable in the framework of top-down management or within the framework of power-brokerage. Even the power of law cannot transform policy from a collection of words to an effective improvement in education.

Given the vested interest in maintaining the structure of education as it is, there is no guarantee that installing the capacity for instructional management will transform education or build the type of commitment which is necessary. But the fact should not be overlooked, that what is really being built is an information system that is essential to any picture of participatory management or organizational coordination.

Even management theory has some principles that seem to have been overlooked in the emphasis on planning and control. Traditional textbooks on management functions would usually discuss the tasks of planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling. Then, often as an afterthought, the author would point out that something called "coordination" was needed to hold them all together. Perhaps management in the age of information explosions will come to be re-structured around the task of coordination. With it may come new insights into what is meant by communication, sharing, participation and organizational cohesion.

Perhaps thinking about how an instructional management capability would be introduced to teachers can illustrate the problem. Even a superficial analysis would suggest that construction of an instructional management system will require extensive participation by central agencies. But central agency involvement does not necessarily mean fixed design or top-down imposition. If one takes the position that an instructional management system must be designed and built by SED personnel or system designers, and then "installed" ready made, then concrete action might be delayed for a long time, and the essence of coordination may be lost.

But there is another alternative, which at first sounds ridiculous or extreme, but it is worth mentioning nonetheless. Suppose that one merely installs an empty computer capability in schools so that teachers can begin to manage their own objectives and resources. That is, assume that the central agency doesn't get involved in systems design at all, but merely places computers in classrooms, tells teachers to develop their own systems; and offers to help as necessary.

It is interesting that a form of this "empty capability" strategy was used in Asbury Park, New Jersey. Asbury Park is a small school system, short on resources, but long on initiative. It didn't wait for state or federal solutions, but decided to use technology on its own. Asbury Park is now a state leader for instructional management and even rents its services to other school districts in the state and supports the state department of education.

Osgoodby (1977) reports that there was resistance to the use of computers by teachers. Rather than impose upon them, the systems that had been developed, they simply installed terminals in classrooms and let teachers use them as they saw fit. Before long, both teachers and students were actively involved in designing their own programs and also began to use the programs which the district was designing.

Discussions with micro-computer salesmen reveal a similar pattern throughout the country. Increasingly, districts are purchasing small computer systems for classroom applications. Sometimes they are used for teaching computer technology. In secretarial programs they are being used to teach word processing. Science and other courses use them to illustrate concepts and conduct research. Both students and teachers are getting "turned on," and spending thousands of hours in writing their own programs. At the present, the typical means of sharing their accomplishments is through clubs and publications supported by computer manufacturers, e.g., Paragon the magazine published by Wang Laboratories, and the program exchange club sponsored by Digital Equipment Corporation.

The "empty capability" strategy is not being seriously recommended by the authors. It is unlikely that the needs of state or nation-wide systems can be met by such grassroot efforts. Involvement of central agencies in systems development is likely to be necessary for both financial resources and technical expertise. While the capability to implement most of the systems outlined in this paper already exists, it is scattered throughout the country with various manufacturers, university research programs and in the Armed Forces which are exceptionally strong in moving toward instructional management in their technical courses. Central coordination and research will definitely be required if only to assemble the pieces. But this does not mean that systems design or policy should necessarily come from the top-down. If participation is to be encouraged, the system should build in provisions for practical modifications by teachers and sharing of those modifications through an information system that can reach the system as a whole. This would not be merely feedback from the field to central agency, it would be communication between local agencies as well.

There is a philosophical issue involved here that includes, but goes beyond, the impact on vocational education. The question was previously posed, "Do we need a national policy for vocational education?" There are two sides to that question. One side asks if

national cooperation and cohesion is necessary to effect improvements in vocational education. The other side of the question asks if the needed improvement must come from a federal law, central agency or top-down approach. It is obvious that the same question is asked repeatedly in our society regarding health insurance, no-fault insurance laws, and so on, ad infinitum.

It is true that change and complexity have presented problems that sometimes seem beyond the capability of local governments to solve. But turning to central government has not provided answers. Not all problems can be solved by pouring federal tax dollars on them. This is particularly true when they come in the form of standardized solutions conceived at federal level which are expected to be applied nationwide. The principle of individualization deserves some consideration in our social legislation as well. Federal assistance does not come without a price. One cost is the same type of standardization, regulation and inflexibility that this paper has criticized in education. Another cost is the loss of local initiative and resentment of increasing government regulation which always seem to accompany federal solutions.

It is interesting to speculate on what would result if the federal government and state agencies combined the principles of participatory management with the type of capabilities outlined in an instructional management system. Rather than focusing on the specific problems that need to be solved, this approach would concentrate on providing the capability for people to manage their own affairs. As with the application of instructional management envisioned in this paper, communities like individual students, will follow diverse paths of development and never use the entire resources or capabilities of the system. Local improvements and modifications can and should be made. The system as a whole might learn from them. Certainly, it would be a case unique in the history of central government, that by improving the local capability for self-management, decisions making and choice, that central involvement could lead to expanded local autonomy while maintaining emphasis on issues critical to the entire system. It is worth a try.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

This chapter will serve two basic purposes: First, an attempt will be made to present a very limited summary of the content and most significant points from each of the six preceding chapters. Second, a number of recommendations for further action based upon the content of the previous materials will be presented.

SUMMARY

Chapter I:

The intent of this paper was to examine in a critical and objective manner the issues, problems, implications, rationale, and basic assumptions behind the reexamination of the need for a generally accepted national policy for vocational education. We have not found the task easy since we have approached the topic in such a manner that has allowed each of us to carefully examine basic assumptions regarding policy, public policy, principles of education, and vocational education, and the philosophical basis for contemporary vocational education.

Of special concern to us was the work and policy formulation dealing with human resources development in a much wider context as used by our "friends" in the Department of Labor who are responsible for the administration of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, better known as CETA to the average unemployed working person in the United States.

One authority pointed out that policy might be considered like a light on the stern of a ship; if you follow the light, you can tell where the ship has been.

We agreed that our intent and effort to influence national, state, and local decision makers had best be focused on the future. Carl Sandberg wrote in PRAIRIE that "the past is a bucket of ashes." We have attempted to examine, review, and consider the ashes of the past as we consider the following question: "As we drive into the future, how much time should we spend looking in the rear view mirror of the past?"

We attempt to establish a framework in grappling with the main issue of this chapter. (1) This framework dealt with the nature of

change and the characteristics of change in this society. (2) The framework must make clear the distinction between philosophy, principles, and policy, or any other term associated with our mission. Also included were questions such as "Do we need a philosophy for vocational education?" and the sister question, "Do we need a national policy or philosophy for vocational education?"

The distinction between a policy and a national policy will be treated in terms of what seems to be the fundamental issue; i.e., the politics of change. The task, as we see it, is not to transfer authority and power to the federal government, but to develop cohesion in the vocational education community while retaining local autonomy and flexibility in adapting to local conditions, needs, and values. By applying information technology, and focusing effort on such concepts as instructional management, it will be proposed that such (3) cohesion can be attained within the current structure of constitutional authority.

The theme will be the capacity for flexibility--even individualization as opposed to rigidity, standardization and institutionalization. These themes have as much to do with the processes by which philosophy and policy is formed as it has to do with the structure of vocational education which exists or that which may emerge.

Chapter II:

The second chapter presented significant background information dealing with many of the contemporary questions regarding philosophy and policy as well as principles for vocational education. This seemed essential so that we could base our framework and approach to attacking the question at hand on contemporary concerns within the profession. Those concerned with the issue at hand are encouraged to go to the recommended primary sources and form their own opinions based upon the literature available. Our search and presentation has by necessity been limited to recent years.

Charles Law in his 1975 paper, "A Search for a Philosophy of Vocational Education," emphasized the need for a reexamination of the philosophic premises of vocational education. Also, during 1975 a publication from the Division of Vocational Education of the University of California entitled "Policy-Making for Vocational Education," stated "one of the persistent stumbling blocks to quality vocational education has been the nature, or in many instances, the lack of policy for vocational education at the state level." This funded project under the able direction of Mel Barlow presented a series of principles based upon beliefs as to what is or should be true vocational education. It was suggested that states may wish to use the principles as a basis for broad general policies and then translate those policies into operational policies and rules and regulations.

On December 15, 1975, the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education (NACVE) presented to the Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, a statement entitled "A Call for a National Policy for Vocational Education." In this statement of record, NACVE made a strong commitment to research, evaluate, and prepare a suggested National Policy for Vocational Education. What is happening among the members of the Council regarding such a statement? Did the Council act too quickly in presenting its call for a policy? We are entitled to know the answer.

At the 1976 American Vocational Association Conference in Houston, Resolution Number 17 was adopted. This was directly related to the issue of policy for vocational education. The resolution called for AVA to work toward the development of a national policy for vocational education. What is the status of AVA's commitment to this resolution? Again, we feel that the profession is entitled to know what steps AVA is taking regarding the stated direction of the resolution.

Henry David's paper "On Thinking about Vocational Education Policy" included in the National Bicentennial Conference Report, THE FUTURE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, should have given the profession much to think about. At times, we wonder how many people are really aware of this paper. We bring it to your attention for your review and comment.

In March 1977, a national workshop was held dealing with the philosophy of vocational education that had many implications for those concerned about policy. The final report from this conference should be "on the must reading" list for vocational educators.

We ask the profession to give careful consideration to the issues and questions that we raise in Chapter II.

Chapter III:

To prepare this report, we developed eight questions that were addressed to 23 opinion leaders nation-wide. Sixteen people responded to the questionnaire. What follows is a consensus report on each question.

1. Do we have a current national policy for vocational education?

Yes, in federal legislation. It is written, but not based on principles. Rather it is political.

2. If we have a national policy, is it adequate?

No, it needs to be updated and is also criticized as not encompassing enough.

3. Do you believe we have a clearly-defined philosophy of vocational education?

Opinion was divided here. Those who answered yes conditioned it by saying that the philosophy is defined but not in actual statements.

4. What relationship should exist between a philosophy of vocational education and a national policy?

The distillation of the answers here results in the perception that philosophy should guide policy.

5. How would you define the word, "policy?"

There was no particular agreement on this. It was viewed as a "general statement," a "point of view," "governing principles for implementation" "strategy," and "gives specific direction."

6. What groups should be involved in the development of a national policy for vocational education?

This was interesting because the answers seemed to reflect how people defined policy. Three major responses: "Congress with input from all the groups," "many groups," "the AVA as the initiating agency."

7. What would be the advantages in having a generally accepted policy for vocational education?

Not much agreement here either although there were mostly positive answers: "provides consistent direction" and "generate support for vocational education," "consensus among vocational educators," "greater coordination," "more effective use of resources," "generally accepted philosophy."

8. How can we develop a national policy?

- (1) Start with direction from Barlow's article,
- (2) Use the legislative process,
- (3) It is already in existence--need to tackle philosophy.

As you can see, we have a real mixture of ideas and opinions on the subject of policy. The responses did help us in formulating our recommendations for the paper.

Chapter IV:

1. Despite our policies which indicate otherwise, vocational education is committed to and imprisoned by the paradigm of job training.

2. The changes which have occurred in the socio-economic system increasingly make the job training paradigm by itself untenable in terms of what needs to be done; and unsupportable in terms of the conditions needed to make it work.

Some of the changes that have occurred and need addressing:

(a) students can't read or write; can't make career decisions; their values are screwed up in the sense that traditional values have been challenged without adequate replacement (this is particularly true of work values); the media provides a distorted view of even adult life, and the kids can't handle it. This is for "normal" kids. The problems are magnified in the handicapped and disadvantages which we now claim to serve.

(b) process. . . kids don't learn at the same rate . . . but our system forces them to and evaluates the instructor on their job skill competence.

(c) out put changes. . . the structure of the job market is shifting too quickly for skill analysis. There is technological obsolescence and unemployment. As Feldman points out, we need to shift from preparing kids to filling prestructured jobs to preparing them to be creative in making their own work.

In short, things are happening out there, and we are blind to them.

Let's get sensitive to change, to people, to students, and perhaps, most of all, to ourselves and the way our thinking can make vocational education a very narrow enterprise, and increasingly separated from society's needs.

3. In considering the matter of policy for vocational education, the world of change will provide its ultimate testing ground. Policy must address our capacity for being sensitive to problems, and building the flexibility we need to respond to them.

Chapter V:

1. We need policy but only as a sounding board, a base from which ideas can be shared and from which cohesion can be built.
2. But policy ends up being mere words. Nothing follows from words unless it is backed up by very human acts of valuing, commitment, and action.
3. Our view of policy is that it must be considered in a circular flow of events which translates knowledge to action and then feeds the consequences of which should change what is believed. In short, the vocational education system must build in its own capacity for learning.
4. Current paradigms for understanding these matters appear to be inadequate. A general system paradigm was presented to help reinterpret what we mean by learning.

Chapter VI:

1. The specifics of policy, as opposed to its theoretical framework, were taken from the University of California publication Three areas were examined.

(a) Program Policy. Again, there is a gap between principles and practice. It is proposed that one of the reasons why vocational education programs do not meet student needs is that we are imprisoned by the structure of schools and standardized programs.

(b) Persomnel Policy. We are committed to the role of the teacher as a transmitter of information. A shift to flexibly organized programs would force consideration of teachers as instructional managers with an entirely different set of skills.

(c) Evaluation Policies. Here the gap is greatest of all. We are supposed to base everything on needs assessment. We don't have a needs assessment system or the capability to develop one.

2. There are important issues neglected in current policy statements.

(a) individualization and flexibility. . . this determines the basic effectiveness of vocational education in a world of change.

(b) individualization forces consideration of the teacher's role as instructional manager.

(c) most of all, we have to address the use of technology in education. Not only can it reduce costs, but it can provide the basic capabilities we need the most.

3. The concept of an instructional management system was introduced in order to show that there are basic principles or systems design concepts which are consistent with everything that philosophy and policy attempts to address.

Its significance lies in the fact that it represents both theory and practice. Implementing it can make policy more than mere words and build cohesion.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is a gap between our principles and our practice. From the standpoint of what needs to be done, we still have a long way to go. Instead of the profession leading and being at the cutting-edge of vocational development, every several years we have to be responsive to a new Congressional intent. Let's try to become leaders, rather than followers. A recent graffiti stated it rather well, "Lead, follow, or get out of the way." which way shall it be for our profession?

2. The basic reason why the gap between principles and practices exists is that we don't have the capacity to practice what we preach. We must start coming to grips with the differences between "vocational education" as it should be practiced within public educational agencies and "vocational training" as it is practiced within federal manpower programs.

3. This lack of capacity can be summarized around the three essential functions which policy and educational theory say we should be performing:

- (a) needs assessment
- (b) flexible program capacity
- (c) individualized instruction.

Until technology is used in education, those capacities can not be developed. For both teachers and managers, the information load that comes with needs assessment is beyond human capacity.

The technology capability exists, it incorporates the basic principles of education and the major issues of policy.

4. Do we need a philosophy and policy for vocational education?

Yes, in some ways:

(a) We need a sounding board for sharing beliefs and building cooperation, participation, and cohesion.

(b) We need a viable policy for addressing change and our capacity for responding flexibly to it.

(c) We need a policy that looks to the future for its standard.

No, we don't need a policy in the sense of:

(1) more words that can't be translated into practice.

(2) Federal legislation or similar efforts that are intended to settle the matter of what vocational education is once and for all.

5. Is current policy adequate?

No, the current assembly of words seems to cover everything but:

(a) the statements are not consistent with practice, and insofar as current policy is concerned, we need action to implement the policy.

(b) But, the current policy also misses some critical issues that need to be addressed.

(1) We have to recognize how much current practice is constrained by the structure of schooling. There must be a conscious shift from standardization to individualized programs and flexibility.

(2) Such a shift implies a second shift in the role of the teacher: from transmitter of information to that of manager of instruction.

(3) Such a shift is impossible without the use of technology.

(4) We see a real need for the melding of the needs of society and needs of students as individuals.

6. We consider vocational education to be "the selective form of education" in the United States. Students elect, select, or choose vocational education in our country. Those not electing or selected for a vocational education program must work toward eliminating those barriers that hinder students from selecting vocational education programs.

7. We realize that our work is like the "tip of an iceberg" floating in a large body of water. Much more needs to be done dealing with philosophy and policy for vocational education.

We hope for cohesion and some common point of reference for the profession in coming to grips with the policy issue.

We encourage the National Association of State Directors of Vocational Education to exert their leadership and form a consortium of other interest groups to deal with the question, 'Where do we go from here?'

The American Vocational Association and the National Advisory Council for Vocational Education, who have made formal statements regarding policy, should be involved in the consortium as well.

As stated earlier, we do need a policy to be used as a sounding board for sharing beliefs and building cooperation, participation, and cohesion within the profession.

One of the most important contributions is that professionals have to debate philosophy and the basic principles of vocational education, so that legislators have a knowledge base from which to develop policy. The professionals must influence any decisions which deal with policy for vocational education and have input into all decision levels whether the levels be local, state or national. The importance of a public forum and discourse is that ideas are clarified and refined through such discussion. The more an idea is discussed, the more closely it is possible to judge its merits and demerits.

We hope that our efforts on this paper have caused others to think about the issue of national policy for vocational education and that a public forum will be allowed to continue. We would appreciate your thoughts and comments regarding our position dealing with the need for a national policy for vocational education.

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